THE WILDERNESS

AN AMERICAN PLAY

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THE WILDERNESS

AN AMERICAN PLAY

ADAPTED
BY
FLOYD JENKINS
AND
RICHARD PUTNAM DARROW
Compilers (with Donald McGraw) of
"Dolls and Toy Balloons"

BROADWAY PUBLISHING CO.
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INTRODUCTION

CONTAINING OBSERVATIONS ABOUT VULGARITY — PLAY-MAKING — CHAIRS — FASHION — HUMAN NATURE — AUTOMOBILES — PLAY-MONGERING — COMIC RELIEF — GEORGE BERNARD SHAW — ROSES — CARRION — PEOPLE — MUD — ART — LIFE — NEAR-IBSENS — HUMAN BEINGS — SLAP-STICKS — HUMAN UNNATURE — DEATH — GOOD FORM — ACTORS — MANNERS — PLAY-ACTING — FOLKS — CLOTHES — HEROES — DONKEYS

AND MANY OTHER PERSONS AND THINGS CONSTITUTING AN

EPITOME OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE DRAMA.
AND A
COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE TECHNIQUE OF PLAY-WRIGHTING

NOTE TO INTRODUCTION

Two or three representatives of our great Theatrical Syndicate have taken exception somewhat violently to the tone of the introduction. They seem to find it unsympathetic. Fortunately for the writers, who are of mild disposition and sedentary habit, the police have an eye on these gentlemen. It will be practically impossible, therefore, for them to resort to any other lethal weapon than the pen. They may be expected to use that weapon with deadly effect. Who's first?

The editors of Punch, or the London Charivari, were to have prepared explanatory diagrams for the use of devotees of that comic, but always refined, sheet who might be betrayed into reading the introduction. But upon reading it, they threw up their hands, and the job, and—— They said it left them all at sea, and made them quite sick. Only when deeply moved, would an editor of Punch use language as coarse and fibrous as that.

INTRODUCTION

FAIR WARNING

No one shall read this introduction, and then complain that his sufferings were caused by wilful misrepresentation involved in the use of the above title. No one has to read it who has not been condemned to do so by a police magistrate. Most of it was written as a discourse on the modern drama, to be delivered before the inmates of a seminary of polite learning for young ladies. But, somehow, the lady principal was never able to set a date for the lecture. But she paid up, after looking over the manuscript, and said that she did so thankfully.

DISCOURAGING FACTS

These are facts:

1. This introduction has practically nothing to do with the play—or with anything else.

2. Probably it is the most slovenly and unliterary, if not illiterate, writing ever set up by or for a respectable publishing house. The stark American language stalks through these pages in its shirt-sleeves.

3. If it has any point at all, the point will be taken only by loose-living newspaper men,

disappointed writers of plays, writers of disappointing plays, prize-fighters who will never come back, and actors whose genius has not been recognized. There are a great many of all these classes.

4. It will shock some people.

5. It will please none.

TOO

6. It is too coarse for the refined, too refined for the vulgar; too flippant for the serious, too serious for the flippant; too plain for the virtuous, too goody-goody for the vicious; too hard for the soft, too sentimental for the hard; too dull for the clever, too clever for the dull; too mature for infants, too unformed for the mature; too obscure for the simple, too obvious for the sophisticated; too much something for everybody, not enough anything for anybody; and altogether impossible for the few who wish to conform, succeed, and become (because none of us is either respectable or fashionable by nature or in infancy) respectable or fashionable.

7. It is not for the young.

8. It is too profane for your pastor. And perhaps

9. It is not profane enough for you.

10. No one will agree with it, and it will disagree with many.

11. The aged and the prematurely old will find it foolish. It is too wise for the immature and the prematurely young.

12. The reader must furnish the ideas: the writers contribute only the words.

13. It is printed here, only for the purpose of making it possible, by increasing its size, to sell the book for more than it is worth. A COMMON FAKE

14. If you have any finer feelings, they will be outraged.

15. Some people will call it desultory.

Now if you read it, the result be upon your own head.

It is impossible to say where we shall begin, whither we shall drift, or where we shall fetch up. We are at sea without compass or rudder. Syntax and Style have walked the plank, and the black flag of the vernacular floats at the peak. ADRIFT

Vulgarity and coarseness, now. This play has a lot of one or the other. It depends on the point of view. Some people can't distinguish between them. It is n't of the least importance that these people should. And some, in their laudable efforts to side-step the one, run their heads bung into the other. Unfortunately, this seldom puts them out for good. VULGARITY AND COARSENESS

HENRY JAMES

Henry James is a right good fellow; but he works too hard, and he makes other folks work too hard. The unintellectual say that the sublime self-unconsciousness of his limpid [Perhaps it is lymphed: ask your doctor.] style is forced. Anyway, when you have read one of his literary orchids four or five times, your agony is but begun. It is pleasant to be assured that he has found so ready a market for his crimes that he will be buried decently when his time comes. It is to be hoped that he will not have to atone for all the suffering he has caused to many innocent people who think that the beauty and strength of the inner meaning must be in direct proportion to the difficulty of finding the meaning. But the truly cultured know that this is art.

THE COOING DOVE

Did you ever read his Cooing Dove in the Place Where the China Washhand Basin Did Not Perhaps? Wonderful! Well, in the long-drawn rhetorical agony of this mystic

ONE GEM

bit, there is one gem—the simple phrase, "the saving grace of coarseness." It means much to some of us. It is the only thing that some of us can remember after a lifetime devoted to the study of the works of the master, the subtle influence of whose knurly style may be detected in every line of this.

Mr. James is scarcely a typical American man of letters, although it is believed that his parents infringed his English copyright by producing him in this country. But there 's Richard Harding Davis,—Dick, as he used to be known [It is to be wished that you newspaper boys [You all know the magic and softening influence of that word.] would remember that the correct form is "as he used to be known as," which is impossible.] among smart young men who were not content to remain in the obscurity for which Nature and their parents had designed them. He is, or was, American all right,—and a downright good fellow. Is he written out? or has he made a noise like a balloon floating away through the empyrean? or what? He 's the lad to write *the* American play, which will not be found in the collected writings of Mr. Belasco, or of Mr.——, for all their knowledge of the conventions of society and of the stage. They ought to collaborate: it would be a corker,—a crackajack. There you are. That 's your illustration: "crackerjack" (the modern newspaper form) is vulgar; crackajack is good old slang, it is coarse, but—— Mr. Davis used to be pretty handy with his fists. Let us therefore pass lightly over his

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

A CRACK-AJACK

many failings as an author, and leave him to the mercies of his own conscience. What it will do to him will be plenty.

A CROWDED CANVAS

He and all the other amiable gentlemen with whose figures our canvas is becoming somewhat crowded must understand that no one is responsible for this. The cat has mixed it up with the sticky fly-paper, and anyone in the house is liable to get scratched. All these people must remember, not only that they are public property, but also that they are before us now only as intellectual entities, like strenuosity or race suicide, and that, therefore, as mere persons, they can't resent the kindly examination from which even the reader and the highest in the land are not exempt. But let us be careful: within the memory of men now living there were, and there may be again, clubs,—Liars' Clubs, Big Sticks, etc.

MR. DOOLEY AND GEORGE ADE

There are two other literary parties who have not been altogether forgotten,—Mr. Dooley and George Ade. They shared a secret hidden from duller people, and they made money out of it. This secret, which they probably discovered by searching their own black hearts, is that we all enjoy ridicule of those weaknesses of human nature which

we understand because Instinct puts her finger on them in our own breasts,—although we think it is only because we are such keen observers. The speculative philosopher wonders how funny they would be without their respective dialects,—their slap-sticks. Are they knock-about artists, or comedians, or tragedians, or only walking gentlemen? How inspiringly suggestive is the terminology of the stage,—walking gentlemen, low comedians, leading ladies [In some cases this means leading exemplary lives.], comic relief! The man looking through this atmosphere sees life,—its beauty, its meaning, its chiaroscuro. Here 's a dare for them. Let them publish editions of their famous works in the English language. This dare is for H. James, too. Then we 'll find out.

TERMINOLOGY OF THE STAGE

But there is an artist who writes in English, George Bernard Shaw. How about him? We shall have to pass him up,—at this time. The rapier of this irresponsible Irishman's wit is too ready for us raw Americans, whose only edged weapon is the scalping knife. Still, we may pause, to recognize our debt to him. He has had a perfectly corking time in getting all the matinée girls and other intellectual leaders over here all mixed up, until

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

they do n't know their moral and intellectual head from their ditto heels. Reverence and irreverence, brutality and finesse, good, bad, and indifferent, black-bean soup and cocktails,—all these and all other things he has so jumbled together in their poor brains that they do n't know whether their hats are on straight. But we have men like Mr. Shaw in this country. When your Indian guide says, "Mebbeso termorrer we work erlong the Sunset Trail over erlong the big barren," you do n't know whether he is thinking that he wants a caribou steak, or that he would like to see you mired up to your waist in a bit of humorous ground to which he means to lure you, or that you would look well with your throat cut, so that he would n't have to divide your whiskey with you. Some people ought to be able to get lots of fun out of their reputation for inscrutability. Then Mr. Shaw invented a household pet which answers to the name of Superman. In the play the title rôle is taken by the leading man: Mr. Shaw loves a paradox. This cute little elemental has caused pleasant shivers of things that she would not like to talk about with her pastor to run down the spine of many-a respectable New York woman who ought to have been

BLACK-BEAN SOUP AND COCKTAILS

SUPERMAN

buying socks for the little ones at Macy's bargain counter. Sometimes the path of duty runs right under our own clothesline; and even the primrose path may run through our back yard, if we have planted the primroses there, and if the children have been careful about watering them. Some day this man will get what's coming to him.

NEAR-IBSENS AND LOUD ODORS

Every modern play that will live as a work of art makes a noise like putrefaction. But many gentle souls are in error in believing that because a play makes a noise like putrefaction, it will live as a work of art. Even dramatists should try to be logical now and then. The inspiring fragrance of the charnel-house, which now ravishes our nostrils, emanates from the works of the near-disciples of the master Ibsen. The only way to attain moral sublimity and true art is to devote ourselves to the study of pathology. Health comes only through contemplation of disease. The fouler and more revolting the disease, the more abounding the health attained.

THE ARTISTIC SOUL AND PARANOIA

Study of paranoia and neurasthenia arouses the finest powers of the artistic soul, however unspeakable the prosaic physician may know the ultimate cause of these little weaknesses to be. Only decaying wood is phosphores-

cent. This is the whole of art, and nervous indigestion is the only inspiration. But foxwood glows only in the dark: in broad daylight it seems to be only rotten wood,—often, to be sure, colored very delicately. If the home of art is not in the hospital, it is surely in the morgue. Edible pork chops are uninteresting, unpicturesque,—they are dead. But in the carcass of the victim of hog cholera rotting in the manure heap, we can study life. It is full of life: it breeds maggots by the thousand. Some people do n't like to eat it.

PORK CHOPS

Some of the above parties, being clever, may make the obvious retort that this screed is n't in the English language either. Quite true; but "You 're another" is not recognized as an unanswerable argument so far from the Bowery as the Olympian Heights where they dwell, and whither other folks are trying to follow them. This is a suburb that is not yet over-crowded, and where rents are still moderate. An Olympian Heights realty company would soon be bankrupt.

OLYMPIAN HEIGHTS

But enough of this. Let us remember, in common humanity, that of making many books about books there is no end. Why read books, when innumerable books about books

tell us more about books than we could ever learn by reading the books?

Bill does not appear in our second act. He comes to life in the third, in which he endeavors to oblige by iteration of those formulas of speech which us literary men know constitute the grim, unsmiling, sometimes deadly, humor of the old-time western gun-fighter. It 's easy. Anybody can do it. A great many people have done it. Some-shore-podner-stranger-hitting the high places-sitting in the game, etc., etc. Now you can all go off, work along the Café Trail to the D. T. Carry, eat a little opium, and write plays that are really about the wilderness,—tours de force, in which the atmosphere of the big outdoors will hang in luscious gobs from the scenery. It is better not to expect too much of the actors. The best of them are little more than human. The stage carpenter is a very successful author these days.

GUN-FIGHTER'S HUMOR

GOBS OF ATMOSPHERE

We may suppose that when our second act opens, Bill has taken a job as pastry cook to a party of campers in the unbroken, although slightly damaged, wilderness of the Adirondacks. Nature is sometimes almost smothered when her reservations are opened to her devotees. Bill's duties include the care

AN UNBROKEN WILDERNESS

and the packing of the folding camp stove, of the supply of coal for the same, of the supply of canned goods (very necessary in this wilderness, as they average about eighty per cent. water, and the native water supply there is mostly contaminated with sewage), the pneumatic beds (quite essential in the wild, and only eighteen pounds each), the hat boxes of the ladies of the party, etc., etc.

A FOREST IDYL

He may be seen engaged in sparking the maid of one of the ladies, who, having dressed her mistress's hair, has leisure to row with him on the lake. The oars are pinned to the boat, so that Bill, careless fellow, can't let them go adrift, and so that he will not have to strain his brain by trying to remember to feather.

NATURE AND HER WORSHIPERS

Or perhaps he (Bill, you know) is busy clearing ground for the site of a new camp. This he finds hard work. Hours of unremitting toil are required to collect and bury out of sight the paper collars, old rubber boots, discarded tooth-brushes, and other offerings with which worshipers of Nature have decorated their goddess. Bill is untouched by the sentiment of it. Not being restrained by the presence of Betty, he expresses his crude

feelings in language that would not be set up by any religious, or even respectable, printing establishment. He can swear in case of real necessity; but he does not believe in wasting good profanity. It is to be feared that he is not religious: he only tries to be square, with himself and with others. And he has in his dull, untutored mind a prejudice against many of those well-established principles and practices without which society, certainly our best society, could not exist. Bill is real foolish.

CRUDE FEELINGS

But he can follow a trail. The imaginary rumor that he lost the trail somewhere in the Racquette Lake region, where there are so many commodious and tasty camps, with rustic work, and sanitary plumbing, and things, and wandered into a swamp, which grew softer and softer as he advanced, until, finding the mud running into his mouth and ears, he began, too late, to think that he might have missed the trail, and so perished miserably,—this rumor has no foundation in fact. But there are people like that. Quite some time ago there was a man who knew a perfectly lovely and refined lady who had a second cousin of that kind. He is dead now,—the

OF MUD

second cousin. It is not always pure accident. Sometimes it is quite impure. And some people like mud, anyway.

AUTOMOBILES AND FASHION

The fact that an aeroplane, or at least a motor-car, is not one of the characters in our play, demands an apology. But, really, human beings were invented first. Sometimes we forget this. But it can be proved. This paragraph is written with the humane purpose of at least ringing in the words. Besides, this makes it more probable that the seal of fashion will be set upon this play, if it is ever produced. We are too prone to forget that we can do but little in this world or in the next without that approval. It is awfully hard for some of us to get it; and there are wretches in human form who never do. One of these worried along without it for a time; but he soon died of shame. His form was so bad that he was hump-backed. Curse him!

JUSTICE TO THE MINOR CHARACTERS

Ordinary good feeling requires that something should be said here about some of the minor characters who do n't get a fair show in the play. It is not possible to give everyone a fat part. And it will not do to leave anyone in the world with the false impression that he does not figure somewhere here.

OF CHAIRS

The chairs in the second act are important, and any competent stage manager will see the necessity of casting some of his best material for these parts. It will be hard; but it can be done. These chairs must stand about with an expression as human as they are able to assume. Much depends on the point of view. The reader or the spectator may not be hard to please: some, fortunately for their families, are not.

THE POINT OF VIEW

The point of view, by the way, is a funny thing. The police commissioner sees the flattering statistics of arrests and the two thousand additional patrolmen that he can't get; the dull-witted burgher sees a number of fat men, who can neither run nor fight, and who must therefore club, and frequently does not see his silverware. The street cleaning commissioner sees the number of loads of refuse removed; the man in the street sees, and smells, and tastes only the wing-ed filth upon which he and his children are nourished. And he blithely contributes to the common weal by sweeping his own filth into the street, knowing that the police are too dignified and too busy with more important matters to stop him, and that the street cleaning department will remove the filth in a few years. We have

THE COMMON WEAL

reduced our civilization to a science; and the free American citizen will spit to windward, if he likes. The other fellow must look out for himself.

OTHER MINOR CHARACTERS

From time to time in the second act persons of the human species [It is almost as unimportant as it is in real life whether they are really of the human species: it is only essential that they should fool us.] pass through the hotel office, some of them pausing to hold communion with oneanother, or with the clerk, who is behind his desk, and who is careful, as any man of right feeling would be, in his position, not to give offence to his patrons or to the audience. As the exigencies of a play require that these communications should be inaudible out front, it is useless for the audience to try to pry into the secrets of these dummy characters. They all mean well; but there is reason to fear that the process of intellectual development was arrested in some of them at an early age: we all have friends like that. These characters are really of very little interest except to the anthropologist.

THE HOTEL CLERK

The hotel clerk deserves a word. He is very polite. The parties who had to get this play out of their systems, or, as Bill says, "blow up," have had the honor of his acquain-

tance for some years, and are glad to embrace this opportunity to vouch for his character. He is a model son, a loving husband, and a devoted father, as so many of us are after we are dead. The clerk is a better man. He always passes the plate at divine worship in the village church Sunday evening; and he seldom, indeed, fails to turn in seventy-five per cent. of the collection. He needs the money, as many of us short-change men, big and little, do. But it will not do to dwell upon his manifold virtues, lest attention be diverted from the play. Of course this makes it almost impossible to cast for this part an actor with a sufficiently virtuous-looking face, but that can't be helped.

A MODEL CHARACTER

As the curtain goes up on the second act, Mrs. Davis, wife and spender of Thomas Y. Davis, the notorious captain of industry, is sweeping through the hotel office.* It does

A MALEFACTOR OF GREAT WEALTH

* This was written on the absurd assumption that somehow, somewhere, some time, some manager would be mad enough to stage the five following acts. There was once a manager who put on a play that failed; but that was before the psychology of the theatre audience had been reduced to the exact science which now enables every manager to select only characters and situations shown by experience to be surely profitable. And the tank drama is obsolete, the cowboy type is obsolescent, and the breezy western heroine, having done her perfect work, has been relegated to the dramatic lumber room. Only subtler themes appeal to

CLOTHES AND GOOD FORM

not matter much how she is dressed. If she is a respectable woman, she will have to read her lines in such raiment as her salary will warrant. But it is suggested that neither a bathing-suit nor a nightgown would be the thing, although quite as appropriate as the clothes, and more especially the shoes, that we often pay our good money to see on the stage. Mrs. Davis realizes that the fact that the local newspaper once rang her in as "a prominent society belle" in her native town, does not qualify her for the metropolitan handicap. She is a little raw, and has not learned to wear her frocks [Or is gowns now the smarter word? These things are important.] with the glad unconsciousness and native grace of Fortune's favorites who really belong.

THINGS ESSENTIAL

These things are not merely important: they are of the essence. Why, there was once a man who, in a moment of madness, took off his hat in a London club. The building collapsed; and three men, four younger sons of noble families, and a number of French counts

the highly trained audience of to-day. The dramatist who would succeed must address himself to the intellect, as well as to the heart. Such simple characters as Beatrix and Bill are good only for one-night stands, except perhaps as chasers in a vawd'vil programme.

were killed,—dead. These counts had come over to recover from scratches received in encounters on the field of honor. They were hardy fellows. Very few of them had fought much in the West, and none of them had ever happened to meet Bill when he was feeling real peevish. They and their titles were sincerely mourned by an aggregate of nearly eighty millions of good American dollars; and one of our raciest newspapers was compelled to suspend publication. It was a sad affair, and occasioned some unfavorable comment at the time.

HARDY FELLOWS

Mrs. Davis is still self-conscious, and can not understand that the truly fashionable women of our finest American culture wear their sartorial creations solely for their own gratification. You may learn much by watching them. But do n't let them catch you at it. Their sensitive, high-bred natures shrink from any approach to publicity. This compels us to admire the nerve and the cruel ingenuity of our ablest editors in securing and publishing so many photographs of them and their clothes. How do these men dare to do it without the consent, or at least the connivance, of their beautifully gowned victims, whose agony of soul we can imagine when

CLOTHES AND THE REAL THING

they find themselves thus made public property,—treated as if they were like those ornaments of Broadway culture who frankly dress to hit you in the eye? These ornaments can not understand the point of view of their really refined sisters. They are unable to comprehend that some people are so primitive that they think that the perfect flower of vulgarity is the woman who is manifestly conscious of her clothes, her hat, her coiffure. Bill is not the only foolish person.

FEMININE REFINEMENT

Mrs. Davis's manners and enunciation, not less than her costume, should express, as well as possible, that blending of costly elegance and inappropriateness which typifies the too hasty effort to assimilate predatory wealth. Some folks die, one way or another, of indigestion. Her culture may be rated at about forty-three per cent. pure. This will not be found in Bradstreet, and is, therefore, exclusive information.

PREDATORY WEALTH

Somehow (but this is the stage-manager's business), as the second act opens, this perfect lady must be made to drift near the small flat-top desk that stands in the hotel office. At this opportune moment (for without this meeting the play could not go on) Beatrix emerges. We had better not trifle with her.

A PLAIN WOMAN

But she will not resent the statement that she is dressed mostly in clothes. She is looking pretty intelligent for her. She does not wear the gems by which we can often distinguish the star, even when the dramatist has made her lot the lowliest. Betty's dress is of the simplest and most appropriate. It always is. We can rely upon her taste. She would not cause a flutter in a lunch club of lady typewriters, where she would see many swell dressers; but she is so stuck up that she would not care. Her friends think that with her the woman, and not the clothes, is the thing. The reader is requested to try to believe that there are women like that. She does not dress her hair. She always wears it, and in such fashion that it might be regarded as a minor index to her character. Her hats are some similar. She has been heard to say that a real hat has a certain structural quality, that all milliners ought to study architecture, and that some architects ought to be milliners. Betty will have her own way about these things.

STARS AND GEMS

MILLINERS AND ARCHITECTS

If everybody was a playwright [A wright is one who works with his hands or feet,—same root as wrought.], the number of plays submitted would not be much larger, but more people would starve to death. In the hope of

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR WOULD-BE PLAYWRIGHTS

accomplishing this result, the publisher has consented to the insertion of the following free list of titles for plays. It is to be regretted that death by starvation is comparatively painless. A strong, suggestive title is half of the play. It is the whole of some very successful plays, and the inspiration of some of the finest dramatic art. Here is the list:

IMPORTANCE OF THE TITLE OF A PLAY

The Old Watchmaker	The Old Sawmill
Storm and Stress	Opposite Poles
Far from Home	Dawn
The Formula	Backwater
On the Trail	Incense
The Home Pasture	Drumbeats
His Friend's Wife	Grist
The Pudding Stick	Their Past
The Bottom of the Well	Aftermath
	Kindred
The Well and the Pitcher	The Furnace
	On the Peek
When the Time Comes	Clay Feet
The Throttle	Verity
Millstones	Geared Up
White Water	The Equation
Off Soundings	Off the Trail
The Gulf Stream	The Woodpile
In the Forefront	The Cloud-Eaters

Out of the Fryingpan
The Stable Door
Unsatisfied
Timber Wolves
Coyotes
In the Rapids
On the Rocks
The Ice Pack
Cobwebs
There She Blows
The Inframan
The Laverock
The Retreat
Outcasts
The Flume
Her Past
Fireflies
Tares
The Open Road
The Peak
Peekers and Pikers
Blood and Water
The Bull's Eye
Both Ends Against the Middle
The Trail
The Back Trail
Back of the Woodshed
Too Late
Enough is Plenty
The Buzz Saw
False Alarms
Both Sides of the Counter
The Village Store
Out of a Job
Ocean Currents
Breakers Ahead
The Wolf Pack
Obsession
The Winds of Heaven
Twilight
At the Flood
The Rearguard
Smoldering Fires
Hearts Aflame
His Past
Afterglow
Banked Fires
The Breath of the North
Among the Peaks
The Lamp
The Long Lane
The Early Worm
A Driving Finish

The Dead Centre
The Flywheel
The Rooftree
Out of the Void
The Joint in his Armor
Naughty Neurasthenia
The Spanish Coil
Dei Gratia
The Yap
Locomotor Taxi
Angels and Fools
The Tiderip
The Stinkpot
Hot Dogs and Warm Babies
Up Against It
The Password
The Test Tube
The Blot
The Strap-hangers
Flotsam
The Long Trail
The Cyclone
The Chaperone
Faint Hearts
The Idolater
Too Much is Enough
Easy Money
The Limit
The Diver
Damaged Goods
The Hearthstone
Into the Night
The Walking Delegate
In Flood
On the Bleachers
Builded on Sand
The Yawp
The Craftsman
Storm Signals
The Bell Wether
The Crucible
The Grouch
The Sooner
Outposts
Once upon a Time
Three Strikes
Star Drift
The Blizzard
Lasses and Lushers
None so Blind
The Bouncer
Dead to Rights
The Rack
The Frame-Up
She Saw Him First

The Beachcomber
The Long Night
Two-Edged Candles
Queen Queerinia
The Driven Well
The Ambassador
The Cloudburst
Getting His
Settled out of Court
The Indian Sign
The Handigraftsman
The Tote Road
His Own Petard
A Cold Proposition
In the Balance
The Fulness of Time
Shades
The Bolt
The Big Noise
The Derelict
The Deluge
On the Job
Time
The Failure
The Cataract
The Thumbscrew
The Summons
The Last Straw
The Dreamer
Deliverance
The Cavern
Loaded Dice
On the Snaffle
Milestones
The Talking Wire
The Battle Joined
Mummies and Mamelukes
Vulgar Fractions
The Paladin
Wild Oats and Primroses
The Abyss
The Glad Hand
Guess Again
The Freebooters
The Anvil
Forget It
All In
And Yet
The Smugglers
The Double Cross
Spooks
A Sordid Boon
The Has Been
The Wisdom of Fools

When the Waters are Moved
The Glacier
The Last Stand
The Dial
The Caravan
The Craven
Shoving the Queer
The Rocket
The Chrysalis
The Devil Wagon
The Tables Turned
Unchained
By Their Fruits
The Weathercock
The Abbess
Dotty's Duty
The Scorpion
The Torch
Cut Off
Four of a Kind
Ace High
At Last
But Even So
Cormorants
Cakes and Ale
It Happens Sometimes
The Viper
Playing the Game
Everyone Knows
Daughters and Dollars
Footprints
The Middle Watch
Half Tide
Half Tied
Graven Images
Harpies
Sunset
Bubbles
The Northern Light
The Turntable
Heat Lightning
Garnered Chaff
Wayfarers
Bangles and Bingles
The Handout
A Gold Brick
The Touch
Thunderheads
The Bluff
Princess Paranoia
Please Remit
If
The Scarib
Whiffs

What Do You Know About That?
Vapor
In the Valley
The Coast of Destiny
Sons and Simoleons
Skundolater Skinks
Aphrodite
The Wreckers
Undertones
The Blessed Isle
How Jones Did It
An Avuncular Aviator
The Bankrupt
As the Sands of the Sea
Playthings of Fate
A Peak in Darien
A Peek at Mary Ann
On the Ponies
Keep the Change
Turst Tickleiminy
Off the Range
Back to the Farm
Sharks and Suckers
Twice Two is Five
The Keystone
Karook Kanikity
Mirage
Nobody's Nothing
Old, Forgotten, Far-off Things
O Mommer
Bacteria Brannigan
Blue Roses
The Mercy of the Cruel
An Incubator Baby
Julliny Quimper and Then Some
A Beautiful Nightmare
Pussywillow
The Flagellants
Pieces of Eight
Bachelors' Buttons
Hard Sledding
The Harvest
Persiflagiston
Long Odds
As by Fire
Ploggs's Paltomany
The Flowering Rod
The Falling Star
Salponica

Play Ball
When the Lid is On
The Rail Fence
A Scotch Verdict
Ducks and Drakes
Hot Ploughshares
The Hornets' Nest
The Sundial
The Spring Drive
The Heir Apparent
The Sanctuary
His Good Money
Noriska Nostugea
Too Often Profaned
He Rode Alone
Many Thunders
The County Fair
The Whaslin Whoffer
The Daydreamer
The Pillars of the Temple
The Falid Faxtol
In God's Country
A Sporting Proposition
Boobs and Boomerangs
The Necromancer
From First to Last
Fatty's Fortune
Once Too Often
A Farmodic Fantasy
Wide Open
Uncle Abijah
The Peony
The Cold Gray Dawn
The Folks Back Home
The Weakest Link
Who Tagged Him?
Just as Easy
Penelope's Pleasance
The Pleached Alley
The Key Log
The Gargoyle
The Cinch
Half a Loaf
The Golden Ass
When Roses Bloom
Less Than Kin
Sackcloth and Terrapin
A Merry Morgue
The Dilettante
The Guerdon
Quaravinta Quaroon
He Who Reads May Run

The Good Old Demon
The Lion's Skin
The Warwhoop
Looking Ahead
The Lash
Cinders
The Jonglers
The West Gable
Goblins
The Vortex
The Parent Stem
The Harbor of Refuge
The Lee Shore
Back Bearings
Besieged
Flames
Root and Branch
The Leash
The Passer-up
The Janglers
The Barn-Stormers
The Brain-Stormers
Hoboes and Hobgoblins
Against the Current
East and West
His Own People
On the Battlements
Under Full Sail
As the Sparks Fly Upward
The Mine
Glowworms
Ashes
Wolves and Watchdogs
The Kiss Jig
The Flop Kiss
Kisses and Cusses
The Kiss That Failed
Parthian Kisses
Mostly Kisses
The Kinetic Kiss
Caramels and Kisses

But the foreman of the composing room says that this must stop. He is a man without soul. In fact, he is on his spiritual uppers.

A GENEROUS OFFER

The above titles are expressly exempted from the copyright of this book. Anyone can

use them. More: ten dollars reward will be paid to anyone who has the nerve to use one of them for a play that is really put on in New York. Plays that are put off, no matter how long, do n't count. Managers are more leary. They have been caught too often. A reward of twenty-five dollars will be paid to the manager in such a case, and he will receive a ticket to a box seat in the Hall of Fame. There he will find some really excellent people. Do n't crowd. You can have as many more of these titles as you want, after this list has been used up. A full line of effective situations, some of them slightly shopworn, is also on hand, and will be disposed of at bargain-counter prices. Stage business in broken lots, at ruinous prices,—by the pound, yard, or firkin. Every day is bargain day. Our doors are always open. Any professional humorist will know that the proper way to wind up this is with an exhortation to come early and avoid the crush. Experience has taught us all that this is funny. Our playwrights have learned that old jests and japes are the safest; and familiarity is the fertilizer of the jester's garden. To some people this old friend will be the only funny thing in all this amorphous production.

BROKEN LOTS

THE PLAY-WRIGHT'S NOTE-BOOK

With the same end in view, the writers give away some of the secrets of the craft. Everyone should try to be esoteric. The principal part of the equipment of the mechan— of the wright is his note-book. In this inspired volume he sets down all the good things that are revealed or conveyed to him, and all the spontaneous epigrams and effective situations that afflict his over-trained imagination. When he has enough of these, he is ready. The divine afflatus is backed up in his system. The play springs into life under the magic touch of his genius,—coherent, homogeneous, convincing, verisimilitudinous, a miniature of life, glowing with inspiration, reeking with atmosphere, vital with that sublimated reality which is the height of art and the acme of poetry. This process precludes all danger of a mechanical result. If a friend says a particularly good thing, it may be necessary to kill him, in order that the gem may not be spoiled by handling before it is presented in its proper setting. Most of us will sacrifice anything for art. And we all have friends who have lived too long, anyway. It is true that the spider spins his web, however intricate and beautiful, from his own insides. But we must not be misled by a mere simile. No

A WORK OF GENIUS

A PREDATORY INSECT

spider ever built a successful play. This is a sufficient answer to those perfectionists who profess to believe that this misguided insect is the prototype of the dramatist as distinguished from the playwright. And even the spider is predatory.

BRILLIANT TACITURNITY

The successful dramatist is necessarily a dull companion. He is constrained to file in the secret drawers of his mind, for professional use, the sparkling phrases and repartees which he is constantly formulating. Were he, inadvertently, to let one of them escape, some fellow craftsman, getting away with it, would snatch the terrapin from the mouths of the luckless originator and his press agent. If, then, you think of making a play, remember

A DISCOURAGING VIEW

that a brilliant utterance is nearly always a combination of words; that, the number of words being limited, the number of possible combinations is finite; that only a small proportion of the possible combinations can be expected to approach the playwright's standard of unforced effulgence; and that the available supply of this residuum is suffering diminution daily. You can't be blamed if you are discouraged: perhaps you will deserve heartfelt commendation.

Perhaps the most important question for the

dramatist is, "What will the public stand for?" It can not be hard for the public to sit through anything it will stand for. It will stand for anything you can make people believe to be the vehicle of a Great Moral Lesson. Pasteurized plays do n't pay. A Lofty Purpose will float the garbage-can on the stream of success every time. It is not necessary to dramatize the Lofty Purpose, or even to persuade very many of its reality. But it must be made easy for anyone who sees the play four or five times to make his friends believe that he believes that they believe that the Great Moral Lesson and the Lofty Purpose are what get him. This is not difficult, for in the theatre people love to inhale a stench the horse-power of which just fails to lift them out of their seats. Therefore, get your money down on Uplift,—uplift of the mind, of the heart, or (safest of all) of the stomach.

THE LOFTY PURPOSE AND THE GARBAGE-CAN

OF UPLIFT

It is a wise manager that knows the limit. Some managers do n't know anything else: they do n't have to. Of course, the broadest culture and the most catholic taste can find beauty where those not so well endowed perceive only putridity. But with these unfortunates, the fear that they will be called provincial, that they will be thought to be the

THE WISE MANAGER

victims of parochial prejudice, will serve very well the purpose of the ambitious playwright.

OF ROSES AND FERTILIZERS

If you really understand these things, a sample of the manure with which they were fertilized will accompany the roses you send to your best girl. When you get her pretty well educated, you may omit the roses. If she does n't like this, she is too narrow-minded and intolerant to be taken seriously: she will never learn that all true beauty has its roots in corruption, and that therefore corruption is the truest beauty.

OF ACTION

Do n't forget that you must have action, and then some. Something must be doing every minute,—on the stage, you understand. Do n't try to be a playwright and a psychologist. Your business is to provide visible and audible action. Nothing is action, in the technical sense, that is not intensely visible or audible. You are not concerned with what may happen in the minds of your audience, if you only avoid the dangers spoken of above. Just give 'em action. You can be reasonably certain that the eyes and the ears down front are in working order: you have no assurance as to the brains. Somehow this fails to explain why those actors of the past whose names survive were not acrobats. Not long ago an actor

won imperishable fame by the way in which he fell over a precipice or out of an airship, with a knife between his teeth, or his ribs, or some of his bony parts. He had Macready, and Kean, and Booth, and Salvini, and Coquelin, and Marcelline beat a mile,—horizontally, and vertically, and every way. What was his name?

A FAMOUS ACTOR

Sometimes it is better to concentrate most of the action in one big scene. Studied dullness in all that goes before will prepare the visuance * for this climax. This will suggest to the thoughtless that what they have sometimes taken for the stupidity of successful plays was really the height of art. The first play to contain a realistic motor-car race will be a record-breaker. Thousands will come quite a number of miles, and will sit cheerfully through the rubbish of which the first three acts will, of course, be composed, if the play-builder understands his trade, to experience the thrill of that Great Scene. If the smell of garbage is mingled in due proportion

A BIG SCENE.

THE JOY-RIDERS

* This word merely recognizes the fact that the appeal of the up-to-date drama is to the eye rather than to the ear. The individual units in the audience, so-called, are spectators, and the question is, "Have you seen The Mark of the Beast?"—not "Have you heard," etc.

with that of the garage, any manager who is on his job will jump at the play, unless, yielding to the force of habit, he jumps on it. It should be possible to stage it nicely for a hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars, and to make the public believe it cost three hundred thousand. The play may be entitled "The Joy-Riders." And after the smash-up (one of the near-Great Scenes), the funny man, pointing to the driver, who has crawled unhurt from the wreck of the noble car, will say to the millionaire: "Is that all you have to chauffer your fifteen thousand dollars?" This will relieve the tension, the funny man being regularly depewted to perform this sad office. And everyone will know that this is funny, because the funny man says it. A clear understanding of his function saves the audience much mental effort. The complete scenario of this great drama, with one doz. ass't'd jsts, for the f. m., quite up to the standard of those above, and working plans from which a journeyman carpenter can build, will be furnished to any manager for seven dollars and a half, forty per cent. off for cash. Any of his hired men can fill in the words. If the playwright will furnish the agony, the dialogue will take care of itself. As an able and successful manager

FUNCTION OF THE LOW COMEDIAN

has said: "Anyone can write the dialogue."

READING PLAYS AND ACTING PLAYS

Words are more or less necessary in a play, but they are mere adjuncts to the essentials. Perhaps it was otherwise before the discovery that ability to speak English is not a necessary qualification of the factory-made American star. At best, words can only convey ideas; and a play is not ideas: it is action,—action and scenery and business. Hence the well-recognized distinction between "reading plays" and "acting plays." The reading play is addressed to the mind: the acting play is addressed to eyes and ears. The reading play, being words, sometimes expressing ideas, can't be acted: the acting play, being action and scenery, can't be read. As literature, the manuscript of an acting play is comparable to your butcher's bill. This explains why our modern dramatic masterpieces are not always among the best sellers. The actor can get over with fine effect many-a quip that would perish in the galley of the compositor. If your maternal aunt can read your play without going to sleep, you may know that it will not do for the stage. Unfortunately, the converse is not always true: Auntie may nod over your play, and so may the audience. The fact that anything that can't be presented by hu-

YOUR BUTCHER'S BILL

THE MANY-HEADED MONSTER

Another thing (and this begins to look like giving away the whole snap): always write with one eye on your typewriter (if it, or she, is pretty) and one on your audience. This may give you mental, moral, and social strabismus, but it will lead to the production of a successful play. Never forget the box-office. It is easy to provide cues for the players, but

CUES AND QUEUES

the queue in the lobby is the only one that the manager will respond to. Remember, then, that the audience is dull, brutal, sordid, illogical,—a cave-man in intellect, an infant in reason, a ruffian in instinct, a schoolgirl in sentiment. It has been trained to understand certain labels and symbols of the dramatic art. Our popular playwrights never forget this: they know that if they did, they would soon be wearing fringes on their pants. If you do violence to the audience in any of the above characters, it will turn and rend you. And if any fool dramatic critic thinks that the good people have been hasty or mistaken, he will be afraid to say so.

OVER THE HEADS OF THE AUDIENCE

To write "over the heads of the audience" is the crowning error of the fool, although many very earnest and eminently unsuccessful dramatists have attributed their failure to this noble fault. Dazzled by the bitter sincerity

of their own souls, they can not always perceive that although the play with a Purpose may be the only play worth while, a mixture of ninety per cent. of Purpose with ten per cent. of play does n't give many people what they want in the theatre. You must understand that plays are written for the lads and the lasses whose idea of poetic fancy is epitomized in the phrase, "the lobster palaces of the Great White Way." They are the public of the dramatist who would not court an early frost.

OF SINCERITY

Yet it may be questioned whether anyone, however heavily charged with a Message, has ever succeeded in writing a play (not an essay, or a sermon, or a lecture, or a debate, in dialogue; for something more than an earnest purpose and a limber typewriter is needed for the construction of a play) that was over the heads of the people. By all means, believe, if you can, what you are trying to say: the professors who know so much about plays that they never try to write one, tell us that sincerity is the backbone of the drama. But the human appeal of the untrimmed backbone is somewhat limited. One play is enough for one audience,—sometimes too much; but every play needs a number of audiences, and the

OF BACK-BONES

principal constituent of an audience is the people in it. In sizing up the popular taste from the plays that people go to see, our brightest and brainiest managers are prone to overlook the probable fact that very few elect to go to see plays that are not produced. The point of view obtrudes itself again: the rag-picker overhauling his stock in the cellar can't see above the feet of the passing multitude. Yet some of these people have heads at the other end.

DRAMATIC CRITICS

The big stick that some of these newspaper fellows own hangs, covered with cobwebs, in a forgotten corner of the attic. They fear that if they were to hit a few swipes with it, they would knock dramatic art clean out of the box. It is easier and safer for them to yell themselves hoarse over every safety bunt than to get thin by thinking of the old days of home runs. Nobody wants to live without eating; and every newspaper is owned by someone. This explains many things.

REVOLUTIONS THAT DO N'T COME OFF

Occasionally some of these newspaper boys, laying aside their mordant pens, get together in a sound-proof beer-cellar, and make modern Rome howl,—in their minds. Then they sometimes say what they think they really think. Then they bewail their double bondage,—to

what they vulgarly and ungratefully call bastard art, without which they could n't live, and to despotic capital, without which they would either starve or have to learn to live without eating. Then they give full sway to the intellectual, artistic, and social independence which characterizes us New Yorkers. They are true reformers, and they are in office. We all know what a sobering, not to say sedative, effect that has.

DAWN OF A NEW ERA

But let all these parties take courage. Some of our most prominent citizens with binfuls of the most prominent money are making a determined effort to stand the pyramid on its apex.* What can not money do to—no, with art? And what can art do without money? They have endowed a real theatre with real money, and are beginning to learn what art can do to money. This sumptuous structure will be the home and temple of the real thing. Only real plays with real actors will be shown there. Already the scenery has compelled the admiration of all the critics. Some of the easy drinkers in the newspaper crowd have suggested, flippantly enough, that as real plays and real actors flourish in our metropolitan

TEMPLE OF THE REAL THING

* This paragraph was written long before half a million dollars' worth of experience had demonstrated several more or less obvious truths.

she makes a thousand revolutions a minute. She is asserting, quite as if it and she were worth while, her individuality,—her congested ego. By forming, and particularly by vociferating, her determination to live her own life, she easily becomes the most important thing in the world. Here, then, are all the essentials of great drama. The little vulgar boy in the gallery may express his appreciation in his pretty, childish fashion, by singing out, "Her to the funny house." But after we have read the critiques, we know that we have witnessed a great performance of a great play. Then we are content, for we learn, on the best authority, that we have had our money's worth; although we have been made sadly aware of the emotional deficiencies of the women folks who darn our socks. One good warm importation will show you more emotion in one Big Scene than all our women showed from Bull Run to Gettysburg. Then you perceive that tragedy is, not in what happens to you, but in the way you take it. That art is the finest which makes the deepest tragedy out of the shallowest characters. The svelt person is acting. The women of the North and the women of the South were only living.

OUR WOMEN FOLKS

HUMAN NATURE AND THE STAGE

In writing for the stage, then, it is necessary to understand that folks go to the theatre to see what they never have seen, never will see, and never could see, in their tabid lives. Hence, if you put too much human nature into your play, you obscure the dramatic art of it. Our skilled playwrights understand this. They have too much respect for their art to fall into this fatal error, and they have too much respect for human nature to desecrate it by displaying it carelessly upon the stage. They are men of fine feeling,—and sometimes funny. If they are clever (and how clever they all are!), we should be satisfied. And they depict such perfect ladies and gents of such good form. And humor—my! but they 're funny. They have to be, even if they can't. And even the least brilliant of them knows that the regular stock pair of cub lovers and a line of thoroughly seasoned comic relief make a combination that always tickles the thoughtful play-goer almost to death.

A SAFE COMBINATION

HUMOR AND SENTIMENT

Why, there was once a dramaturge,—an awfully nice fellow, with five toes on his left foot. He was born so: he could n't help it. He confided to his admirers that he had a call to reform the modern drama; but certain ill-natured playwrights whose work had been re-

jected of the managers insisted that he had heard some other noise. His masterpiece was the finest ever,—a very model of dramaturgidity. It was full of the most beautiful sentiment; but it lacked comic relief,—very necessary; a play must have it, you understand. This poetic party [His neckties were perfect dreams.] was so full of fine, not to say tenuous, feeling, that he seldom took a joke, although, as, like all us geniuses, he was often hard up, his friends sometimes missed other little articles. His belfry was so full of bats that his ladifriends just knew he was the goods. Anyhow, his characters could n't have been funny. That would not have done. They were the vehicles of real sentiment and feeling. Where would Abraham Lincoln be as an heroic figure, if he had ever dared to make a joke?

LADI-FRIENDS

HUMOR AND ANCIENT HEROES

On the other hand, such are the paradoxes that we mortals are up against, some of the heroes of ancient history sometimes made themselves ridiculous, because they had no sense of humor, subjective or objective, which, we must understand, is either a disease, or an abnormal development, of the sense of proportion.

COMIC RELIEF

In the drama, as in life, comic relief is a

necessary ingredient. Often the untimely laugh affords the only escape from insupportable woe. Some things are so serious that they would kill us if we could n't laugh at them. It is better to laugh than to die. Perhaps we sometimes fail to realize that only the opportune administration of the playwright's favorite counter-irritant has saved us from a horrible death at two dollars a seat. We should be thankful for the dose, even if it is forced down our throats by main strength. The playwright, he knows. If he has no humor, he will get some. But usually he has an inexhaustible store of it in his note-book.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT GETTING THINGS MIXED

It is very important not to get these things mixed. If the heroine, who typifies sentiment and all the tender emotions, or the hero, whose job is to be a real noble feller, were to make a joke, they would find themselves playing to an audience of corpses; and this would make it uninteresting on both sides of the footlights. Of course the funny man (who will always have a job, since the process of perfecting the dramatic art has been brought to a triumphant conclusion) may be allowed to say something tinged with true sentiment, along toward the end. This is very effective.

Well, this playwright had a friend, who,

THE ART OF COMIC RELIEF

being seldom sober, was wonderfully clever, and a master of persiflahaha-age; and he suggested a great idea to the wright. So they worked on it together, and polished it up. The result was seen when the play was put on,* and the wonderful sentiment of it had reduced to tears the orchestra leader, and the head usher, who is cynical and hard to move, and the fireman in the wings, and all the marriageable girls in the audience, and even some of the paper in the back rows. In a sentimental sense, it was a knock-out punch. All these folks were groggy,—they were taking a walk down Queer Street. But for the lovely incidental music, these parties would have passed away in ecstatic agony. The music saved them. It mercifully took their minds off the fatal poesy of the play, and they survived. At this psychological moment, suddenly, down the steps of the château [The piece was an international romance.] came four flunkeys in the livery of the noble house of the hero [He was real light-complected.], bearing in their stalwart arms (of all things!) a donkey, a real, live donkey. Of course, this gave immediate

INCIDENTAL MUSIC

* The writers wanted to speak of this as the première of the play, thus, "when the play had its première But they find that only dramatic critics are licensed to use this knowing and super-elegant word.

relief. But that was not all. They carried the donkey upside down. This was more unexpected still. And every competent playwright knows that unexpectedness (or sometimes repetition) is the essence of humor. If you hear a thing said nine or ten times in a play, you may be almost sure it is funny. Don't forget this. In fact, for the drama, repetition may be said to be the soul of wit. Well, when the audience had recovered from the burst of merriment that rocked the house from pit to dome, it came out that this seemingly improbable and irrelevant occurrence came about in the most natural way.

ESSENCE OF HUMOR

The donkey was a household pet, as he is in many estimable families. He was kept chained to his kennel in the back yard of the château. He was perfectly devoted to bones, and usually he was plentifully supplied. But the cook [See how natural this is.] had been drunk the night before, and had forgotten him. He became uneasy [We all feel that way sometimes.], and broke his chain, in which [Not a detail necessary to verisimilitude was overlooked.] there was a defective link. In his search for bones, he got, unobserved, into the château. He crept softly up the back stairs, and got into the spare room (guest

PET DONKEYS

THE GUEST CHAMBER

chamber to people with incomes over three hundred thousand), which happened to be occupied by a very thin, spare guest. So the donkey, feeling tired (again, as we all feel sometimes), with the contrariety of his kind, jumped up on the bed, curled up, and, purring contentedly, went to sleep on a three-thousand-franc down quilt. So you see how naturally it all came about, and how convincingly the episode was woven into the fabric of the play. It takes ingenuity to write plays.

UNREASONABLE CHARACTERS

When this play was in preparation, the writers had many anxious conferences with the three principal characters. These people were very hard to manage.

A COSTUME PLAY

It was first proposed to make a costume play,—much the safest kind, as only the modern thinkless actor is needed. Beatrix said it did n't interest her, and she guessed she 'd go home to the boys. And this was the woman of the combination! Hopeless!

A SOCIETY DRAMA

A modern society drama seemed almost equally alluring. There are so many excellent people to whom the theatre affords the only opportunity to get next to really smart society. Us dramatists owe a duty to these people, and on the whole we discharge it pretty conscientiously. Of course, this play was to be all

right,—something a seasoned matinée girl could take her own mother to,—not indecent, oh! no; the characters not to wade in the slime, unless they wore hip-boots, but only to navigate their frail craft on its iridescent surface in such fashion that the audience should expect to see them fall overboard at any moment. But something saves them. This is where the heart interest comes in. Then there was to be one Very Strong Scene, which, as every schoolboy now knows, is all that a play needs. Bill said the Very Strong Scene was some stronger 'n his stomick, w'ich it was li'ble ter buckjump, ef it was loaded with anythin' stronger 'n tea thet hed b'en b'iled fer half an hour. He 'd see the writers plumb ter hell before he 'd go through four acts an' three very fine climixes holdin' his nose like the woods was full er polecats, an' breathin' the stink through his mouth. Ef he ke'ched one er them cunnin' little wood-pussies rubbin' up ag'in him, he 'd hev its hide off it an' nailed ter the side er the shack before it c'd bat an eye. He cal'ated it 'd look some prettier without even the clo'es it was born in. No clo'es was the on'y clo'es thet 'd fit it reel well. That settled that.

A VERY STRONG SCENE

OF WOOD-PUSSIES

A comedy of manners was voted to be out

A COMEDY OF MANNERS

of the question, a large part of the equipment of the modern actor being ignorance of comedy and innocence of manners. Fosdick declared his belief that good manners were almost as rare upon the stage as in the best Sunday-newspaper society. Bill said that as he did n't know nuthin' erbout manners, he would n't set in no sich a game. Beatrix refused to appear in any play in which Bill would not feel at home, and added that, anyhow, Bill's manners were too good for a comedy of present-day manners.

A DRAMA OF REAL LIFE

It was then suggested that the demi-monde was a mine from which many dramatic gems had been taken, but in which, if you 'll watch the automobiles, many large and brilliant ones remained. Fosdick put his foot on that; and although he wore shoepacks at the time, he busted the idea. Until that moment the writers had thought him a man; but this revealed him as the hopeless lay figure of a prig that he was. How pitiably inadequate is his equipment for his part, is revealed in the fourth act, in which he presents the impossible spectacle of a hero meekly holding up his hands because he fears that if he lowers them, he will be catching bullets on the fly. This weak-minded display of common sense pro-

A PITIFUL HERO

claims Fosdick's ignorance of the first principles of stage heroics. He does not even know that no gun-fighter was ever yet quick enough on the draw to hold up a real stage hero, that in the drama only the villain is sufficiently intelligent to know when the real thing has got the drop on him, and that the most popular of matinée idols could never survive the humiliation to which he submits as a matter of course. He could never qualify as a karnegero, although he would just love to wear the medal * modestly in his necktie, and to show to the reporters affidavits establishing his heroism.

KARNEGEROES

We were up against it. In each case it was

* These medals take their name from that of the eminent person whose good money pays for them, and after whom most things are now named. You can't be a hero—that is a certified karnegero, without adequate proof of your heroism. The would-be hero and a number of responsible persons must make affidavit to circumstances which establish conclusively the applicant's heroism. And the standard is high: the affidavits must be good and strong. It is best to employ counsel familiar with hero practice; for it is humiliating to have one's just claims denied. No one likes to be told that he is no hero. The successful applicant is rewarded by receiving the medal, by a number of good press notices, for which a skilled press agent should be employed, and by having a fine capital K branded on his façade. Thus the whole hero business has been standardized in the most satisfactory manner, and taken out of the realm of mere romance and fiction. Undoubtedly this is one of the greatest boons ever conferred upon mankind. Too often unaided humanity has tagged the wrong hero.

evident that the two others were with the objector.

PRECEPTS FOR PLAYERS

But worse was to come. These three people got together, formed a sort of union, and promulgated the following precepts for players:—

1. Do n't holler when you 're mad. A man who hollers when he 's mad is too trifling to have around. The madder we get, the quieter we 'll be,—until the time comes.

2. Do n't talk much with your hands, feet, or pompadour. They are designed for other uses; and you are provided with parts which, used intelligently, will better serve the purpose of communion with your kind. Some people even have brains.

FEELINGS AND AMARANTHINE GATES

3. Do n't talk Johnsonese when your feelings are stirred. If you do, they ain't. The deeper the feeling, the deeper the source of the words; and the words that lie deepest in your being are those of your mother tongue, not those of the dictionary. The hero who suggested to his love that she should fly with him through yon cerulean ether to the amaranthine gates of Paradise, was wondering whether his back hair was parted straight. It is the one best bet that it was. Real feeling knows only the syntax that is bred in the bone.

Real emotion is in your insides: you do n't turn handsprings.

ELOQUENCE OF SILENCE

4. If the writer has not provided you with lines that seem to you worth while under the circumstances, say nothing. You may bust up the play, but you will save your self-respect. There may be more virtue, even more eloquence, in silence than in all the things that some respectable people of ninety have said in all their lives, compressed into two minutes. We have been trained not to waste our wind.

5. Take your time. If you 're soon enough, you 'll not be too late. To be too soon never does any good.

SLAP-STICK ARTISTS

6. Go on strike, if they cast you in a play in which the slap-stick has a leading part. If we all went to college for thirty or forty years (a hundred for some), the face-makers and slap-stick artists would all be playing to empty benches in a better world, and they would n't get a hand.

LOVE-MAKING AND WRESTLING

7. Remember that love-making is some different from catch-as-catch-can wrestling. It seems so to us; but we are plain people. We bar the strangle hold. The love of upper Broadway, both on and off the stage, is another matter. We know nothing of these subtler things of life that are as familiar to

leading play-makers, actors, and managers, as the clothes they owe their tailors for. Some folks are so foolish that they think even their minds are involved in their loving. Some have no minds. They are often good wrestlers.

8. Do n't try to measure the excellence of your performance in terms of foot-tons. The things you make your audience think you could do are likely to be more effective than the things you do.

ACTION AND INTEREST

9. We 'll be satisfied if, and only if, we can keep our audience interested. Action is a good dog, but Interest is a better. If you can not make your stage character interesting, battle, murder, and sudden death, pistols and poison, dope and disease, atavism and adultery, and all the accepted aids to agony, will not put you in right.

10. Unless your contribution to your part is far greater than the playwright's, you are not an actor. He supplies the words: it is your job to furnish, to create, the personality.

THE ART OF LISTENING

11. Try to listen. It is more than half of conversation, and, properly done, is more than a quarter of good acting. A cheerful listener may be welcome when a brilliant and

previous talker would be a bore. Unspoken flattery is one of the corner-stones of society.

12. If you have any brains, use them. If the playwright or the stage-manager won't let you, hunt another job.

13. It is better fun to think about your lines, if you are anything but clothes, than to be wondering whether your make-up is right. It will also please the audience more.

14. Play to the best part of your audience. It is easier to make people accept what is too good for them than to persuade them that they like what they know is not good enough for them. A flattered intelligence is tamer than an insulted intelligence.

THE ACTOR'S BEST ALLY

15. Never forget that the best part of a play should be enacted in the minds of the audience. There is a limit to your vocal and muscular activities: some things have no assignable limit. If you go to the limit in diction, action, and shouting, you leave nothing to the imagination, and so lose your best ally.

A WALKING GENTLEMAN

To complicate the situation further, Fosdick said, with a hardness in his eye that belied the soft weakness of the imitation stage hero that he is, that if any writer tried to make a walking gentleman out of him, with nothing in the world to do but to come on

when every two-year-old in the audience knew he would come, and to go off when every rounder knew he would have to go, he would take that party over his knee, and fix him so that he would have to dine at a lunch-counter for a week. Fosdick said he could whittle a better man out of basswood. He said he was a busy man.

THE JOB OF BEING A WOMAN

Beatrix said that, for her part, she would do as she liked when the time came. Bill's habit of what she would flatter him by calling thought, even his manner of giving expression to it, was so woven into her nature that she could n't get shet of it. She did n't want to. She had never tried to be a perfect lady, and she was n't going to begin at her age. The job of being a woman kept her busy.

COMIC RELIEF

This seemed to excite Bill, who thereupon took up his parable to the effect that ef said party cast him fer sich a fool part ez ol' Comic Relief, they 'd be doin's prompt thet would n't be no ways comic, not fer some folks.

ANGELS AND FOOLS

Thus these well-meaning but clumsy people, rushing in where very few angels without the price have trodden lately, strove to butt down with their silly heads the pillars of the shrine of dramatic art, scantified by the heart's blood of loose women, dope fiends, reformed rakes,

and unfaithful wives, who work so hard nightly up and down Broadway, in plays bursting with heart interest, to show us ordinary mortals what life really is, and to bring home to us those great moral lessons which they and their creators are so well qualified to teach.

What was to be done? These three, with their crazy code, had barred every element essential to a play. Nothing remained but to turn them loose, and let them do their worst. That was done. This adaptation from the French is the result. Obviously it can't be a play.*

* The designation "play" is used in the introduction, merely as a matter of convenience. But no writing which consistently violates the rules and the traditions of our best dramatic art can properly be called a play. Even the stage directions in the following pages are not couched in those terms to depart from which makes a writing not a play. Could the presumption of ignorance further go? Bill and Beatrix, with the help of Fosdick, have made a hopeless mess of it. Imagine a spot-light actress's appearing in the first act before the audience has been prepared in the customary manner for her entrance.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Some people who are far from dull have found it difficult to imagine Beatrix and Bill in the environment in which they are placed. It is but kind, therefore, to state the following facts, for the benefit of those who are either so clever as to know, or so dull as to suppose, that our friends could not have been where we find them:

John Walton was a rich man, who had succeeded in large undertakings in the western country. His interests embraced mines, railways, timber lands; and probably cattle ranches. New York City is as yet the financial centre of this country, and in the not far distant past the West depended upon eastern capital. Such activities as those in which Walton had toiled and won his way are not independent of the financial centre. As a matter of fact, much of the capital associated with Walton's had its home in New York City, and some of it even touched Boston. Men associated with him in business had the misfortune to live in the East.

It happened, therefore, that his affairs sometimes

been a potent factor in the elevation of the American drama to its present proud eminence. We must find his excuse in the fact that he did not foresee that she would ever be cast for that part.

Beatrix is now in Maine because, (1) applying to the boys the ideas which her father applied to her, she has had the boys at school in Massachusetts; (2) she does not want to be, as yet, in the region most intimately associated in her mind with the father whom she has not ceased to mourn; (3) she wishes not to lose sight of Herbert; (4) she has a super-constitutional right to be in any state to which she can afford to buy a railway ticket; (5) she has money enough to enable her to be where she wants to be, and to make her independent of the scene-painter; (6) she means to have her own way in this, as in some other things.

As for Bill, if what follows does not make it clear that he will be found where Beatrix is, and why he will be found there, it is not the writers' fault. A very interesting dialogue between these two, which was nicely designed to save the reader from brain-fag,* and in which these and other obscure points were explained with sufficient sprightliness, was ruthlessly cut by them. They

* The compositor whose Monday morning take included the Important Note, had this "brain-fog"; but for this chronic and sometimes congenital malady, even psycho-therapeutics has not discovered a remedy.

protested that they were unable to deliver it in any but the most spiritless manner, and Betty persisted in yawning in the middle of the most illuminating historical and genealogical utterances that had been assigned to Bill. They were willing to present themselves; they refused to explain themselves.

Fosdick's presence at the summer hotel has also been a stumbling-block to the man from Missouri. Some people of unimpeachable taste have thought that he was n't in the picture. The most superficial study of the contemporaneous drama would convince these doubters that mere artistic necessity affords a sufficient reason for anyone's presence anywhere at any time. In Fosdick's case, however, there are other and more commonplace reasons.

The widow of his paternal uncle, Ezra Q. Fosdick, having an income sufficient for the indulgence of her tastes and the cultivation of her talents, finds occupation and recreation in the exploitation of several genteel maladies, which are her only defence against constitutional ennui. Somewhat to his discomfiture, she is fond of Robert Fosdick. Thinking that she needed his advice as to her investment in the Four Flush Mine, she summoned him to the Maine coast, where, at the Bay Head Hotel, she was combating insomnia in a most interesting form. He meant to stay there only three

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days. But after he had dictated a number of letters, he decided that the work which he had underway could be done best in the invigorating air in the immediate vicinity of Farewell Ba Eight days after his arrival his Aunt Rachel wa driven to the mountains by the recurrence of her hay fever, which was perhaps the choicest piece in her collection.

Further explanations are refused. If playwrights were compelled to explain reasonably all the absurdities, the incongruities, the improbabilities, the inconsistencies, and the impossibilities of their plays, the task would exhaust their ingenuity, they would not have any invention left for serious work, and we should have no more drama. If you want to enjoy a play, you must accept it. It is best to leave your critical and analytical faculties at home, in the ice-box.

THE WILDERNESS

AN AMERICAN PLAY

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

The Spirit of John Walton.
Beatrix Walton, daughter of John Walton.
Bill Herrold.
Robert Fosdick.
Herbert Walton, son of John Walton.
Jack Walton } *younger sons of John Walton.*
Dick Walton }
F. Bosworth Masterson.
Red McShane.
Mrs. Thomas Y. Davis.

ACT I.

Boat-float on the shore of the Waltons' island on the coast of Maine.

ACT II.

Office of the Bayhead Hotel on the shore of Farewell Bay on the coast of Maine.

ACTS III., IV., V.

On the shore of Farewell Bay.

THE WILDERNESS

ACT I.

[*The boat-float on the shore of the Waltons' island on the coast of Maine. The season is midsummer. On the float lie a dory, resting on its bottom, and a canvas canoe, bottom up. Two row-boats float alongside. Oars, paddles, lobster-pots, and boat-gear are disposed upon the float, in a more or less orderly fashion. The shore of the island, with which the float is connected by a gang-plank with a hand-rail on each side, is rocky and wooded with birch, pine, spruce, and hemlock trees. The similar shores of points, and of other islands, with channels and reaches between, are seen in the middle distance and beyond, and far on the horizon are misty blue mountains. Upon the further side of the float,* BILL HERROLD *kneels, steadying with both hands a birch-bark canoe, in the bow of which* BEATRIX WALTON *kneels. Upon the float beside her lies the bow paddle, its blade still wet. The stern paddle lies by* BILL.

She rises and steps lightly from the canoe, without assistance. She wears a plain, brown, soft felt hat, without adornment, gray flannel shirt, a brown silk neckerchief, an old leather belt, brown khaki skirt, the hem of which is at a point half way between knee and ankle, gray woollen stockings, and plain, unbeaded moccasins. BILL *is not dressed at all,—that is, he is garbed after the manner of his kind. He also wears moccasins, or shoepacks. Each of them taking an end of the canoe, they lift it, dripping, to the float, and set it down upon its bottom.* BILL *takes an old waistcoat from the stern of the canoe, where he has been kneeling upon it, while* BEATRIX *lifts and throws upon the float the small canvas cushion upon which she has been kneeling.*]

BEATRIX [*feeling the side of the canoe*]. The sun will be hot to-day, Bill. This gum is soft now. You had better tote the birch up into the shade.

[BILL *tosses the canoe upon his shoulders, walks up the gang-plank, and disappears in the woods. He then returns. In the mean time,* BEATRIX *has been stretching and working her arms, legs, and fingers, to take the stiffness out of them.*]

BEATRIX. That was something like old times, Bill. We rather made her smoke the last three or four miles. We left the boys hull down. They can almost hold us now for a mile in the light canoe; but when it comes to real work, they ain't in it with

us old hands yet. Ouch! I 've got a cramp in that forearm: I told you you were holding me too long on the left side.

[*She holds out her right arm, the fingers contracted with cramp.* BILL *turns up her sleeve, and rubs, pinches, and slaps her forearm with much vigor, her fingers relaxing under this treatment.*]

BEATRIX. I wish you would n't chatter so. You make rational conversation quite impossible.

[BILL *sits upon the gunwale of the dory, takes pipe and tobacco pouch from his pocket, and prepares for a smoke,* BEATRIX *standing and gazing dreamily into the distance. When his pipe is ready,* BILL *takes a sulphur match from his hat-band.* BEATRIX *goes to him, takes the match, lights it man-fashion, and holds it while he lights his pipe.*]

BEATRIX. What 's the matter with you, anyway?

BILL. Nuthin'.

BEATRIX. Perhaps you think I do n't know everything that goes on in the agglomeration of matter which I suppose you call your brain. You 've got an uncommon fine article of grouch because of what I said to you a spell back. But you see, Bill, I 'm bound to break out of the corral. I can't help it: I 'm uneasy. I must go,—anywhere, over yonder, beyond something. What kind of a country do you suppose there is, now, the far side er them mountings? I want to see things,—and things. You

know that I can find my way in the tall timber; and I guess you know that when John Walton's daughter has made up her mind, she 's going to come pretty near having her own way.

[*She sits on the gunwale of the dory.*]

BILL [*plaintively, to an imaginary auditor*]. Ain't it ridic'lous? Here 's this ornery leetle gal, thet I 've dry-nussed ever sence she wa' n't no bigger 'n my gun [*Feeling for the gun that is not there.*] I hed her so 's she 'd eat outer my hand. An' now she goes plumb locoed. An' w'at kin I do? My nerve is busted; I 'm gittin' old an' wore out. I do n't doubt but w'at a broken-down pack mule could heave me over his head. I s'pose she calls it a declaration er inerpendence. [*To* BEATRIX.] I calls it downright, damn foolishness.

BEATRIX. You 've got a touch of the sun; or perhaps you are only in your dotage. I do n't know, though, that you were ever a master hand to read the mind of a woman.

BILL. I dunno. I dunno. Ye 're a sight more like yer dad then ever any of the boys 'll be.

BEATRIX. Am I really so much like father?

BILL [*angrily*]. W'y, Gal, do ye s'pose ef ye hed n't er b'en, I 'd 've turned myself inter a lop-eared sheep dawg an' follered ye ter thisyer gawd-fersaken kentry, w'ere all the water 's alkaline

[*Waving his hand toward the water.*], an' a man can't take a drink without stickin' his elber inter another feller's eye? Like him!

Beatrix. But, Bill, you do n't drink.

Bill. Not w'en I 'm on my job, I do n't; an' you ain't give me a minute's rest ner peace fer nigh onter three year now. I guess it 's erbout time fer me ter pull my freight. The job hez got so ez ter be too big fer me. I ain't no more use here.

Beatrix [*turning aside and speaking with much emotion*]. We 've b'en on the trail tergether fer quite some years,—you an' me. I hed hoped ye might be with me at the end of it. [*A pause. She turns to him, and speaks with chastened sadness.*] I have had a premonition of this. For some days your innumerable good points have been much in my mind, and something that I feared was an obituary notice has been taking shape in my head. There is some relief in discovering that it must have been a letter of recommendation. [*Rising and walking toward the gang-plank.*] I 'll go up and reduce it to typewriting, so that your departure may not be delayed. [*She walks up the gang-plank, turns before reaching the upper end of it, comes part way down the plank, and sits upon one of the hand-rails.*] Perhaps I can give you an idea of what I think of saying. I should like your approval.

[*Her face assumes a thoughtful expression, and her brow becomes slightly puckered.*] Something like this:—

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mr. William Herrold [That 's you, Bill.] has been in my service for eighteen years in the capacity of nursery governess to a girl whose age has varied constantly during that time. He has given entire satisfaction,—to himself; and leaves my employment now only—only because he has imparted to his youthful and engaging charge (me, Bill)—youthful charge, all that he knows, and many other useful and agreeable accomplishments. Under his able, although not always humane,—tutelage, she has learned to follow a trail, blazed or unblazed; to ride almost anything on three or four legs, except—except a grand piano; to shoot very melodiously upon several kinds of firearms; to walk further and pack more than any but the most brutal would—would ever require of an unarmed girl; to remember that the panic in the human head seldom communicates itself to the compass—except in the season of blue moons; to tell by the use of the unaided human eye (and brain) which way is up-stream; to go softly, carry a big stick, and keep to the right on a trail that is crowded with grizzly bears; never to get out and walk when taking a canoe down white

water; to keep her matches dry; to catch, clean, cook, and eat muskrats, mushrooms, beetles, black flies, plug tobacco, and the other delicacies of the wilderness; to guard the point of the jaw; and otherwise to comport herself in a refined and ladylike manner. [Bill, I 'm shore gittin' some interésted in this.]

Perhaps Mr. Herrold's most graceful accomplishment is drawing. He has been recognized as a leading exponent of this branch of the graphic art by the critics of the ranches and mining camps of California, Wyoming, and Arizona. The quickness and sureness of his touch have been much admired, and in this particular he has not been excelled by any of his contemporaries. In his earlier days—in his earlier days he participated in many competitions,—and always with success. He is living evidence of this. It is believed, such is the sensitiveness of his nature, that he could not have survived failure. His work has been frequently exhibited; and he has always been held in such respect by hanging committees that he has never been skied. [I do n't mean that, Bill.]

At one time he gave great promise as a painter in monochrome; but the art emporiums of New Mexico, where he was then pursuing, and frequently overtaking, his studies, were unable to supply the voracious demands of his palette. It is known, however, that two of these studies in his earlier manner

were hung on the line in the art gallery at Toad Valley. It is understood that they are now buried in one of the smaller collections of the great Southwest, but, it is feared, not in a good state of preservation.

Mr. Herrold's age is anywhere from five to fifty-five years. He is often sober, industrious, if well bossed by a person of iron will and perfect indifference to danger, as honest as—he knows how to be, and fully competent for any job—job that is well within his capacity. His only failings are an entire lack of sense of humor, and a constant tendency to fits of peevishness, in which, however, he seldom kills anyone, unless he forgets himself.

I can not, therefore, recommend him too highly [The fine ambiguity of this is probably lost on you.] —too highly, as—as companion to a nervous invalid, or as preceptor to any healthy and thoroughly courageous child whose fighting weight is not less than a hundred and ninety pounds, and who—and who carries a knockout punch in either hand.

There, Bill, I feel better already. I knew there was something inside of me trying to work out. Of course, that 's just a rough draft. But something along those lines ought to insure you pretty constant occupation in the more peaceful parts of Massachusetts or Rhode Island.

[*During this recital,* BILL *has sat smoking stolidly: he laughs but twice, and does not smile, during our acquaintance with him.* BEATRIX *goes to him, seizes him by the collar with both hands, and shakes him roughly.*]

BEATRIX. Now, you ornery ol' grizzly, I calls yer bluff. W'en ye goin'?

BILL. Now, Betty Gal, ye knows mighty well thet w'en yer dad passed in his checks, erway out nigh ter the head waters er the Yaller Gravel, with his head a-layin' on my knee, I promised him I 'd never let no harm come nigh ye, not ef I c'd help it.

BEATRIX. I know it, Bill, dear.

[*She kisses him softly upon the forehead, and then walks slowly up the gang-plank.* BILL *surreptitiously puts one hand upon the spot that she has kissed, and then looks reverently at the hand. As she nears the upper end of the plank, he speaks.*]

BILL [*savagely*]. W'en ye goin'?

BEATRIX [*turning to face* BILL]. On Thursday. I 've got everything ready. You know what I mean to do with the boys. You 'll stay here and hold down the ranch until you hear from me. [*She turns shoreward.*]

BILL [*partly aside*]. Like hell, I will.

BEATRIX [*turning and coming toward him*]. What? I thought I heard a kinder foolish noise.

BILL. Nuthin'. I was talkin' in my sleep. It 's growed on me. It 's got so now I talk in my sleep sometimes w'en I 'm awake.

BEATRIX. I tell you, Bill, it is n't fair. Father began without a cent, and fought his way up. He saw life. And here am I, with all the other and better things that he gave me, as you never tire of telling me, and as I never tire of hearing, weighed down by a pile of silly money. But I will not be held down. I 'm going up against the world for a while. I 'm going to see that country over beyond the mountains. I 'm going to put to practical use some of the things that Father made me learn, and learn well,—some of the things I used to do for him. He had to earn his living. I 'm going to see whether I can earn my living, or whether I 'm a mere——

[JACK *and* DICK *come down the gang-plank. They are dressed rather carelessly in trousers and flannel shirts of neutral tints, with old felt hats and moccasins. Their gray woollen socks are drawn up over their trousers. They carry paddles.*]

BILL. Good evenin'. 'Ef I was you, I 'd hev one er these yere leetle mechanical polecats put inter my canoe, so 's I c'd keep up with the gals.

JACK. We got hung up on the Shark's Fin, and the darn old canoe got to leaking so that we had to leave her on the far side of the island.

BEATRIX. [*attempting to embrace the two boys*]. My boys, my boys! [JACK *avoids her, and she embraces* DICK, *who hugs her affectionately.*] Saved, saved from a watery sepulchre! [*With one arm about* DICK, *she addresses* BILL.] Do you suppose I can ever teach these innocent darlings to find their way about alone? D 'ye figger they c'd foller the trail 'erlong the right er way from White Water ter Bull Pup Sidin', ef they was tethered ter the slow freight?

BILL. They might: they might, on a clear day,—ef the rails was whitewashed good,—an' the wind did n't blow so 's ter take their mind off the blazes.

BEATRIX. I thought they had the bearings of that reef down pat. I 've shown them on the water, and I 've shown them on the chart; and if they 've seen me do it once, they 've seen me go clear of the easterly end of the Shark's Fin by the thickness of the skin of a birch-bark a hundred and four times. [*Releasing* DICK, *and addressing the boys with sad precision of utterance.*] You can do it every time, at this stage of the tide, on the blasted pine ranging with the sou' westerly corner of the cook shack until you just open the point of Seal Pup Island. Then you—— Oh! what 's the use? You children ought to be where you would have nice fat policemen to carry you over the crossings. Then you could travel without having to use your brains.

JACK [*with great dignity*]. That will be about all of that, Beatrix. I 've something to say to you.

BEATRIX [*taking shelter behind* BILL]. Please do n't begin by scaring me to death.

JACK. I wish to know——

BILL. Haw! haw! haw! He wishes some ter know.

BEATRIX. Quit your yapping, Bill. I do n't like the poor child's looks. I fear his health is suffering.

BILL. He does look reel feverish.

JACK. What 's all this rot you 've been talking to Dick? He says you 've got it all framed up to herd us into a summer camp school with a bunch of palefaces that probably could n't get across Central Park without a guide.

BEATRIX [*very sweetly*]. Or go clear of the Shark's Fin without a tow line from their sister's canoe. [*Pompously.*] Yes, John, my affairs compel me to absent myself for a considerable period from that family of which, until this fatal moment, I have been permitted to consider myself at least the titular head. While I do this with much regret, as you can understand, I am not at all certain that the incidental advantages of the plan that I have perfected with the expenditure of many hours of anxious thought, will not far more than outweigh the inevitable pain which must attend even the tem-

porary sundering of those domestic ties which are recognized as sacred by all the nations of the earth which have the smallest pretension to civilization. For myself——

JACK. I won't stand for it. It 's the wrong dope. You want to guess again. I 'm getting to be a man. Yon can't treat me like a mommer's darling. I 'll appeal to Herbert.

DICK [*looking for a line of retreat, and edging toward the gang-plank, a symptom which leads* BILL *to saunter over to the lower end of the plank, where he stands*]. That 's the stuff, Jack. Stick to it. I 'm right with you.

BEATRIX [*sweetly, to* DICK]. You 're right with him?

DICK. Sure.

BEATRIX [*more sweetly*]. You want to be right with brother, do n't you?

DICK [*doubtfully*]. Yes.

BEATRIX. Fine. We 'll try to fix it that way. [*To* JACK.] Did you ever notice that Herbert had his bridle on me? You do n't even know where he is, —somewhere along the coast, in someone's steam yacht, learning from willing teachers how to spend the money that he never worked for. Herbert had got too far before I found myself. But I 'll make men of you two, if I have to cripple you all up to do it. This family conclave is drawing to a close.

To me, it is, indeed, a sad occasion. It is a terrible thing for one who has enjoyed power which may justly be described as autocratic, to feel that the reins—no, the sceptre is slipping from his nerveless grasp, that his brief term of glory is verging to its close. [*Her voice shaking with emotion.*] John, my lad, you have spoken brave words.

[*During this harangue, the boys have drawn together, as if for mutual protection.*]

DICK [*aside to* JACK]. You want to look out for her when she talks like that.

BEATRIX. I have read in the Bible,—or was it in Shakespeare?—that words are good when backed by deeds, and only so. We have had the words,—fine words, grand words. [*Bearing down threateningly upon* JACK.] We will now proceed to have doings.

JACK [*backing away as* BEATRIX *advances*]. You let me be. I do n't want to have to hit a girl.

[*He looks desperately toward the gang-plank, which he sees covered by* BILL. BEATRIX *draws him with a feint, and he lunges at her, not seeming to know whether he means to strike or to seize her. She grasps with both hands the wrist of his extended arm, passes his arm over her shoulder, turns her back to him, and, leaning quickly forward, throws him, with a "flying mare," into the water.* DICK *tries to dodge up the gang-plank, but is caught and held by* BILL. *As* BEATRIX *advances slowly*

upon him, she signals to BILL, *who then lets* DICK *slip from his grasp. As she rushes upon him,* DICK *dives from the float.*]

BEATRIX. You are sure the most harmless looking pair of bad men I ever saw. I do n't believe you 'll even frighten the cunners. Swim ashore, now, and run up to the shack. Sister will be up in a minute to tell you what she has decided to do with you. That was good team work, Bill. We do have fun with the kids. [*With real feeling.*] I hate to leave the little dears.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

[*Office of the Bayhead Hotel on the shore of Farewell Bay on the coast of Maine. The hotel is obviously a large wooden structure, with all the beauty and dignity which commonly characterize the architecture of such havens of rest. A wide door, standing open at the back, gives on a wide piazza, beyond which the ground slopes sharply to the shore of the bay. The rugged westerly shore of the bay is seen stretching away to the southward. It is wooded, and runs out to a bold point, with a light-house on the end. The office is a thoroughfare, with an entrance on each side. At the left and near the back is the desk of the clerk, where that functionary and his assistant are seen from time to time busy with their labors. During the act people pass through the office, sometimes stopping to speak with oneanother or with the clerk. What they say is interesting, but must be inaudible to the audience. If any of them are very tired, they may sit for a few minutes in the chairs which stand about in rich profusion. No upholstery is visible to the naked eye. The only adornments are a few colored maps, two or three coast survey charts, and some steam-*

boat posters, displayed upon the walls. On the right and near the front is a door, upon which is the legend "STENOGRAPHY AND TYPEWRITING." Near this door stands a small flat-top desk. MRS. DAVIS *sweeps through the office. As she passes near this door, the door opens, and* BEATRIX *emerges.*]

BEATRIX. Mrs. Davis, may I speak with you a moment?

MRS. DAVIS. W'y cert'nly, Miss Wilber.

BEATRIX. Your little boy tells me you say that I am rich. What does that mean?

MRS. DAVIS. Well, now, I had n't intended to say a word to anyone. I thought 'f I 'd discovered a secret, I ought to keep it to myself. I on'y gave a hint to dear little Neddie, because I thought he might annoy you with his high spurits, 'f he thought you was on'y a common typewriter.

BEATRIX. Please tell me what you think you have discovered.

MRS. DAVIS. Well, I ain't perf'ctly cert'n; but two years ago I saw Beatrix Walton, the great heiress, in Noo York, an' I think you 're her.

BEATRIX. You flatter me.

MRS. DAVIS. No: I do n't think so. Of course, your secret is quite safe with me. You 're too pretty, mu dear, to be doin' this. But I 'm glad to see you 're wise enough to do your business with

the men out here. You ought to have a chaperone. Then you c'd join in the gay life here, and take the position that—that——

BEATRIX. That my wealth would entitle me to, —supposing me to be Beatrix Walton. Let us have an understanding. If I am not Miss Walton, you are only wasting your time, and——

MRS. DAVIS. Oh! but, mu dear——

BEATRIX. Pardon me, Mrs. Davis. I sought this interview, because I had something to say to you. I find it difficult to make myself quite clear to one who is adept in the graceful art of talking and listening at the same time. As it is my idea that I am seeking to convey, perhaps you will let me put it in my own way.

MRS. DAVIS. Certunly: w'y, of course. I on'y——

BEATRIX. Mrs. Davis, if I am not Miss Walton, you are wasting your time, and would only make yourself ridiculous by imparting your suspicions to others. If I am Miss Walton, it is quite evident that I do not wish my identity to be known, and that anyone revealing it without warrant would not be in the good graces of the great heiress,— might even incur her enmity.

MRS. DAVIS. I understand perfuctly. You know you can rely on my discretion.

BEATRIX. I know nothing about you. If I am

Miss Walton, of course I can not prove to you that I am not. If I am not Miss Walton, I am a poor typewriter, who is too much flattered to be in a hurry to correct your mistake. You must excuse me. I have work to do.

[BEATRIX *passes out through the door of her room.*]

MRS. DAVIS. I wish I was perf'ctly sure. But I guess there ain't much doubt.

[MRS. DAVIS *goes out by door at back.* FOSDICK *enters, and knocks at the door of* BEATRIX'S *room. She opens the door, and comes out, with pencil and note-book in hand.*]

BEATRIX. Good morning, Mr. Fosdick.

FOSDICK. Good morning, Miss Wilber.

[BEATRIX *sits at her desk, opens her note-book, and prepares to write.*]

FOSDICK [*standing*]. Letter to Mr. Morton. You have his name and address. [*He dictates rapidly and with little hesitation.*] Dear sir, Your letter of the sixteenth instant reaches me this morning. I can not see that another conference now is necessary or even desirable. It will take me at least a week to finish my report, to which I am giving all the time possible. My field notes are voluminous, and here and there, because of the roughness of the country and of the weather in which they are made, hard to decipher. I can not

answer very definitely your inquiry about young Masterson. I only remember hearing that his general reputation is that of a professional little brother of the rich, with all that that implies as to brains and principles, and that the paltry allowance of ten thousand dollars, made him by a rich father, hardly suffices for his simple needs. Whether he can influence English capital, as you suggest, through his noble brother-in-law, I do not know. You will understand that I am not prepared to advise you as to the wisdom of your associating him with you in your Catamount Mountain enterprise. Yours very truly,—— I 'll be back for that in ten minutes.

[FOSDICK *goes out.* BEATRIX *enters her room.* MRS. DAVIS *and* MASTERSON *stroll in by door at back.*]

MRS. DAVIS. So you have n't made much progress?

MASTERSON. No. Perhaps it 's my own fault. The girl is too damned ugly. Now, what 's the meaning of your telegram? Why did you order me here?

MRS. DAVIS. Mu dear boy, do n't say that, jus' because I 've lent you a few thousan'.

MASTERSON. Well, why did you request me to attend you here?

MRS. DAVIS. Because I think we 've got the reel

thing this time,—wealth, distinction, beauty. The other one is n't a circumstance.

Masterson [*sitting down*]. That sounds rather good. What 's the name?

Mrs. Davis [*sitting down*]. Now, look a-here, Freddie, this is so good I wan' to be sure we understan' this thing. I have n't made any breaks, so far. I 'm at this hotel because there are some people here that it may be worth w'ile to know jus' at first, an' none that 'll bother me in the least, 'f I reelly get started. I mus' keep away from the reelly smart people till we 're ready.

Masterson. That 's right enough. You could n't touch them without help, or not without a campaign that I rather think you 're not up to.

Mrs. Davis. Now, you 're a man of the world. Let 's take all the how-d'ye-do, an' after-you, an' not-at-all sort of thing fer granted. Let 's be plain. You need money: you 've got to have it. I wan' to be a figger in reel Noo York society. I 've got the money,—plenty of it. Mr. D. 'll let me have all I want fer this. All he c'n do is to get it: he 's fergott'n how to spend it. With your help, I c'n get w'at I want without havin' to wait too long. Without it, I prob'ly can't get it at all. You 're as big a swell as any of 'em; an' your sister, the duchess,—w'en she comes over nex' winter, can soon

be the makin' of me, with your help. You say, an' I believe, from w'at I 've heard, that she 'll do it, 'f you say so. The money you 've got to have you can't get anyw'eres else, or cert'nly not half as easy as you can from me. I 've advanced you twenty thousan', w'ich you say is about gone. I 'll give you a check fer ten tomorrer. W'en you've had a hundred thousan' from me, my part of the bargain is complete.

MASTERSON. Oh! if you put it that way, yes. Yes; that 's it.

MRS. DAVIS. An' if you marry a forchoone within two years of the first of las' month, I 've done my part without any more paymunts, because without my money you could n't even go w'ere you 'd see an heiress.

MASTERSON. Yes. Oh! I agree. That 's what it amounts to.

MRS. DAVIS. Now see how I trust you. The forchoone is Beatrix Walton. I 've got nuthin' but your bare word.

MASTERSON. What! that wild girl? I 've understood that she knew no one east of Cheyenne, that she was more of an Indian squaw than a white woman, and that when she was in the East she lived in a wigwam somewhere in the woods, and ate nothing but roots and raw fish. I 'd rather given her up as quite impossible. There are some

things a gentleman can't do. But she is rich. Old Walton certainly gathered in the shekels. The best line I 've been able to get on her makes her about five million. I suppose she is as good as anything in sight just now.

Mrs. Davis. Do n't you worry: even you would n't be ashamed of her. I 've heard her quoted as high as twelve. Well, I 've been able to put this girl under obligation to me, an' she reco'-nizes it. It 's jus' possible she 's comin' here soon. I 'll say she's pretty cert'n to be here soon; an' I 'm the on'y person in this part of the world that could intredoose you to her. I heard from her on'y this mornin', an' I will be in constant communication with her. I can't tell you all I know, but I advise you to stay here three or four days, anyway. She might be here as soon as that. You 'll find it dull enough. Of course, there are some pretty girls. They 're all off on picnics an' things now. By the way, about the prettiest girl here is the hotel stenographer. She 's quite the lady, an' has n't shown any int'rust in the men. You might be polite to her. But be careful. I know w'at a gay, reckless feller you are; an' that won't do with her. Be reel nice to her. Come, an' let me show you your way about. Your room is all attended to, an' one fer your man nex' to it. They have n't got any reg'lar servants' quarters.

[MRS. DAVIS *and* MASTERSON *stroll out by door at back.* FOSDICK *comes in. He knocks at* BEATRIX'S *door. She enters, and hands him his letter with an envelope stamped and addressed. He sits at the desk to sign the letter. As he rises, after signing, folding, and sealing the letter, she speaks.*]

BEATRIX. You were wondering about your stamps. [*Looking at her note-book.*] You have thirty-seven of the two hundred left.

FOSDICK. I 've written a lot of letters, have n't I?

BEATRIX [*with some surprise*]. Why, yes.

FOSDICK. But then, we 've sent off some rather heavy reports and things like that.

BEATRIX [*about to enter her room*]. Oh! yes.

FOSDICK. Miss Wilber, you seemed surprised at an obvious statement of mine a moment ago.

BEATRIX. I know I did. I did not mean to be rude.

FOSDICK. You were not rude. You know why you were surprised?

BEATRIX. Why, of course.

FOSDICK. Why? You do n't mind telling me?

BEATRIX. No, although I do n't see what you are driving at. It was because, although I have worked for you almost daily for three weeks, that was the first thing you had said to me not strictly in the line of business.

FOSDICK. You have noticed that?

BEATRIX. Honestly, I do n't think I had. But when you did step just outside that line, it gave me a sort of a little shock.

FOSDICK. And now I 'm over the line with both feet.

BEATRIX. Mr. Fosdick, I have work to do.

[*She puts her hand upon the knob of her door.*]

FOSDICK. Give me two minutes. I won' t let you begin by misunderstanding me.

BEATRIX. Is n't the word a little large?

FOSDICK. Because I used a bit of slang, you began [I hope I do n't flatter myself by saying began.] to have your doubts?

BEATRIX. Slang? Oh! both feet. No, no. [*She laughs, taking her hand from the knob of the door.*] You should hear the boys,—the office boys.

FOSDICK. Good. Now, you never worked for any man a quarter as much as you have for me without having an appreciable amount of talk with him that was less rigidly confined within the limits of business than all our talk has been.

BEATRIX. Suppose that is so, what of it?

FOSDICK. Your definition of a gentleman is good enough for me. I like Thackeray's, but——

BEATRIX. Thackeray's is mine.

FOSDICK. Then you 'll not misunderstand my asking you to give me in a lump the non-business

talk I have been saving up until I have a credit balance of about two hours, and that 's at the rate of only five minutes a day.

BEATRIX. You are ingenious,—perhaps too ingenious. Have you been practising this curious system of temporal bookkeeping from the first?

FOSDICK. No. For the first week or so, it was entirely out of respect to your attitude. Then this idea did occur to me. And now, can't you give me my balance outside of business hours?

BEATRIX. I hardly think so. Not that I have any particular objection to talking with you. But there are reasons why I want to make my life here as colorless as possible.

FOSDICK. Colorless?

BEATRIX. Yes, and particularly not tinged with the nauseating color of the petty gossip that runs riot in this place. The air here hums with the ceaseless vibration of many tongues. What they say, and what their owners, or those who are owned by them, think, matters to me, essentially, as little as the social and intellectual activities of the no-see-ums on the beach. But I have seen times when I was mighty careful not to stir up the no-see-ums. This, as the boys would say, is one of them times.

[*She turns to the door, and puts her hand on the knob.*]

FOSDICK. You are from the West. [BEATRIX

pauses, with her hand on the door-knob.] Sometimes, when I have been dictating to you about the West, I have been unable not to see that your heart was in that country. [*She turns toward him, taking her hand from the door-knob.*] I 've seen your eyes glisten—Forgive me: I have not meant to spy upon you. You were there before me. Could I—I am confessing all my sins. Sometimes your eyes grew moist, particularly when you heard certain names; and I have affected to hesitate and stumble, because it seemed to me that your spirit was out there in the big stillness which is never silent. I know it, too. Here is my worst offence. Sometimes, when I was doubtful whether you had met an old friend, I tried the name a second time: I did not often have to try a third. Here are some of those that I am sure of. [*Taking a memorandum from his letter-case.*] Shall I read them?

BEATRIX. I do n't know. Yes.

FOSDICK. One Pan Creek. Crutches Pass. Bitter Water Pond. Three Cache Carry. White Water. Bull Pup Siding. Now we are getting down to civilization. Led Horse Pass. Big Wind Gulch. Quick Water Ford. And there are others that I meant to try. Big Pine Canyon. Marmot Ridge. The Big Elk Trail. The Yellow Gravel. The Low——

[BEATRIX *passes quickly into her room.* Fos-

DICK *walks slowly out.* MRS. DAVIS *and* MASTERSON *stroll in.*]

MRS. DAVIS. So that 's all there is to the place. Freddie. I 'm goin' upstairs to mu poor boy. He 's in bed. I think he mus' 've et somethin' that did n't agree with him. [*She goes out.*]

MASTERSON. "Et something that did n't agree with him." If he ate as many things as he used to, they did n't agree with oneanother.

[*Noticing the sign on the door of* BEATRIX'S *room, he goes to the door and opens it.* BEATRIX *comes forward, and stands in the door.*]

MASTERSON. Are you the typist?

BEATRIX. The——?

MASTERSON. Typist. That 's what they call 'em in England.

BEATRIX. No: I am only a plain American stenographer and typewriter. Have you work for me?

MASTERSON. Well, now, do you know I would n't say plain, if——

BEATRIX. Do you wish to dictate something?

MASTERSON. Yes. I want to write to my tailor.

[BEATRIX *sits at the desk, and prepares to take notes.* MASTERSON *moves a chair to a position from which he can observe her at short range, and sits down.*]

MASTERSON. This is a letter to Mr. Thomas Turner, Fifth Avenue, near Thirty-second Street, New York. You may begin by saying, My dear Turner, About those suits we were talking about, I have something that I particularly want to impress on you about them—not the ones you were to have ready for Lenox, because I am not at all sure whether when the time comes, it will be really necessary—— [*Pauses and stares at* BEATRIX.]

BEATRIX. Really necessary.

MASTERSON. Oh, hang it! Where was I?

BEATRIX. Really necessary.

MASTERSON. I know, but have n't I lost the thread, somehow?

BEATRIX. I do n't know.

MASTERSON. Well, write that out, like a good girl; and I 'll go over it, and put it in proper form to be written finally. Oh! you might add this: I 've seen about all the girls in this hotel, and there is n't one I 'd look at a second time. I mean, of course, among those who are here for pleasure, and——

[MRS. DAVIS *comes in, glances at* BEATRIX *and* MASTERSON, *and speaks aside with the clerk at his desk.*]

BEATRIX. Pardon me. I find that sometimes, when their minds are occupied with important mat-

ters, my customers get things mixed. It occurred to me that you had undoubtedly forgotten that you were writing to your tailor.

MASTERSON. By Jove! you know: I believe I did. You need n't write out that last.

BEATRIX. You 'll find the other at the clerk's desk. What is the number of your room?

MASTERSON. I do n't know.

BEATRIX [*rising*]. Your name?

MASTERSON. Masterson,—F. Bosworth Masterson. Do you know——

BEATRIX. Have you any more dictation?

[MRS. DAVIS *turns from the clerk's desk, and looks at* BEATRIX *and* MASTERSON.]

MASTERSON. No, but—— I 'm sure I 've seen you somewhere. I can't think——

BEATRIX. You must excuse me. I have a great deal of work; and I can talk only business in business hours. [*She enters her room.*]

MRS. DAVIS [*coming forward, as* MASTERSON *rises*]. The doctor mus' see that dear child as soon as he comes in. He 's got a temp'rachoore of a hundred an' one, I think. He bit the end off the thermometer. He 's so high-spurited. [*Nodding toward the door of* BEATRIX'S *room.*] You 've been follerin' my suggestion, eh, Freddie?

MASTERSON. I 've been dictating a business letter, if that 's what you mean. I 'll not deny that I

find the girl snappy; and I like 'em that way. Thinks she 's above her station, and all that. She was embarrassed: probably she 's only used to business men. But outside of business hours,—that 's it. You heard her. I can take a hint from a pretty girl.

Mrs. Davis. Jus' you be careful. You wan' to have a good reputation, you know. Well, I mus' go back to mu baby. I 'll see you at dinner. Dinner at one o'clock! [*She goes out.*]

[*As* Masterson *goes to the clerk's desk, where he speaks aside with the clerk,* Fosdick *comes in.* Beatrix *comes from her room, and takes some papers from her desk.* Fosdick *passes near her, and she speaks.*]

Beatrix. Mr. Fosdick, I owe you an apology.

Fosdick. Please do n't. And I am sure I need not apologize for calling to your mind things that are dear to you, even if a little sad.

Beatrix. I must either ignore the no-see-ums or defy them. Thus far I have ignored them: now I mean to defy them. The East is far from new to me; but of late my wires to the West have all been down, and perhaps I am a little homesick. The temptation to talk with one who knows my country is too much for me. The early morning is the only time that I can ever be sure of having free. If you will meet me here tomorrow morning at six, we

can walk down to the shore, and reduce your credit balance.

FOSDICK [*as* BEATRIX *is about to enter her room*]. At six to-morrow morning.

[MASTERSON, *as he goes out with the assistant clerk, unobserved by* BEATRIX *and* FOSDICK, *looks sharply at* FOSDICK.]

END OF ACT II

ACT III

[*A little plateau on the shore of Farewell Bay. To the right and half way across the back is the rocky edge of a bank, or bluff, which may be supposed to fall sharply twelve or fifteen feet from the level of the plateau to the beach below. The beach is invisible, the line of the bluff's edge cutting the waters of the bay beyond. Upon the left and at the back is a large rock, or small cliff, of Maine granite, rising sheer fifteen or sixteen feet. Its face is irregular and fissured and covered with lichens. Here and there in the crevices upon its face grow ferns, and these grow more luxuriantly along its base. In fissures near the top of the cliff, two stunted, wind-blown cedars find root. They are straining seaward under the influence of the northeast storms of many-a winter. Above and beyond the rock, only sky and water, except that in the middle distance a rocky, wooded point makes out from behind the cliff, with a lighthouse on the end. Beyond the point, the open Atlantic and the horizon, where sky and ocean meet. Broken pieces of rock at the base of the cliff afford convenient seats.*

The time is half-past six in the morning of the day following that of Act II.

BEATRIX *and* FOSDICK *are seated. He smokes a pipe.* MASTERSON *appears at the right of the cliff. After peering cautiously at* BEATRIX *and* FOSDICK, *he withdraws.*]

BEATRIX. Mr. Fosdick, out West our manners are sometimes rough, but our etiquette, as you must know, is very strict, setting its face particularly against the smallest display of curiosity about the affairs of a casual acquaintance. You must not try to find out my origin, my history, my ambitions, hopes, or fears. I know that such things are probably the stock in trade of the summer girl. You will find plenty of them in our happy family yonder. I am a working woman.

FOSDICK. You do me an injustice,—not intentionally, I am sure, for you seem to me (and I 'll say this, if it does offend you, because it is the bare truth)—you seem to me to be the very goddess of justice. Therefore you shall not charge me with meanness of which I have not been guilty. I resent it from you, as I should from a man. What I said meant that I should like to know all that you would willingly tell me about yourself, and no more,—not another thing. If you think me capable of prying, our acquaintance becomes, I am sure,

impossible to you: my self-respect makes it impossible to me.

Beatrix. Perhaps I have been unfair. No: let me just talk straight. It seems to be harder here than in my own country. I have been unfair. I apologize. Enough of this. Let us go West again.

Fosdick. One other thing. You must believe that I am incapable of presuming on your condescension in any degree. You have made it clear that my part is that of a live wire between you and the things out there. I shall not forget my part. I am content with it.

Beatrix. Condescension! [*Smiling.*] That is truly funny. Here is a young man with all the outward signs of comparative freedom from imbecility; successful beyond his years, as I have learned in my business capacity, although I know nothing as a talking animal; interested in big things, worth doing, that will bring him wealth, and perhaps a kind of fame, within five years; safe, quite safe, from immediate danger of starvation; without serious physical deformity, so far as I have observed; richly endowed by a prodigal Nature with sight, hearing, and an excellent imitation of the power of speech, —and this young man talks about the condescension of a stenographer to whom [*Consulting note-*

book.] he now owes a balance of fourteen dollars and seventeen cents. Thirty-three two cent stamps, sixty-six cents. Net balance, thirteen dollars and fifty-one cents.

FOSDICK. I 'm sure flattered a whole lot. I think you have a nice appreciation of shades of meaning in language: your education in that respect has evidently been catholic. When I said condescension, I used precisely the right word,—or it would be precisely right but for the fact that you came out to meet the West, and not to meet me.

BEATRIX. Yes: the West. [*After a pause, she speaks very gently, looking into the distance.*] My father was a western man,—a kind of pioneer, a natural explorer, a rolling stone. He always was for finding out what was beyond the next ridge, and beyond that were ridges and ridges. He was my best friend. He taught me to cruise the woods by course and distance. He taught me many other things. From him I get a spirit of exploration that leads me sometimes into regions where a compass is of little use. Without much education himself, he was determined that I should be learning every minute; and his idea of education was not bounded by the books.

[*A moment before she finishes speaking,* FOSDICK *lights a match, his pipe having gone out. As she finishes, she takes the burning match from him,*

and holds it while he lights his pipe. She blows out the match, but continues to hold it, looking dreamily at it. Then she throws it away, and looks up.]

BEATRIX [*with a little start of surprise*]. Why! I must have been three thousand miles away: I used to do that for my father,—always.

FOSDICK. I understand.

BEATRIX. You must have seen some of the big men in the West,—some of the men who did things.

FOSDICK. Yes: I have worked for some of them. [*After a pause.*] I remember once when I was running lines for Walton in the foot-hills of the Sierras——

BEATRIX. John Walton of Wyoming?

FOSDICK. Yes.

BEATRIX. Everybody out there worked for him sooner or later. I have copied contracts in which his name occurred.

FOSDICK. Wh——

BEATRIX [*after a little pause*]. You knew him?

FOSDICK. As a man on the verge of his system, as one of his innumerable antennæ. I spent two summers for him in the foot-hills of the Sierras, and once I was for two weeks in his office, working up my field notes into a report. I used to see him then.

BEATRIX. Of course all western people knew about him. Our trail crossed his sometimes. He must have been an interesting character, but a hard, implacable man.

FOSDICK. So, many people thought. But I grew to admire him; and I think that after a time I should have grown to love him. He was the strongest man I ever knew.

BEATRIX. Tell me about him. A strong man always interests me.

FOSDICK. Hard and implacable, I know he was considered. But in those two weeks, and even more in ten days that I spent with him in the open, for sooner or later he saw everything for himself, I got to know him better than the world knew him. He loved a fight, and he was implacable to those he believed to be his enemies. But he always fought fair. He always had what he believed to be good reason for his enmity.

BEATRIX. I have understood that he was uneducated.

FOSDICK. I wish I had half his education. In the ordinary sense, he was not an educated or a refined man; but he had learned more in the hard school of life than some men would learn in a thousand years. Perhaps he learned as much in Nature's school. Not that he was a naturalist, further than any good woodsman is a naturalist; and

a better woodsman never stepped in moccasins. No: I could not understand it. I do n't believe he understood it himself: he was not introspective. But in the wilderness his spirit seemed to expand and at the same time to grow more massive.

Beatrix. And with all his great affairs, had he time for picnics in the woods?

Fosdick. Picnics! Have I made you understand the man so ill that you can talk of picnics and John Walton? I think some of the best work of his brain was done on the trail and in quick water. Have I not said that he seemed to draw inspiration from the woods? I am very sure, at least, that from them he drew much of that strength which was his even in the cities. [*After a pause.*] His brain seemed to be geared so that it always worked true,—not brilliantly, perhaps, or always rapidly, but with a kind of inevitableness that was like the tide of the ocean.

Beatrix. You have said that he fought fair. Was he a square sort of man?

Fosdick. He had hewed out for himself a system of philosophy and a code of honor; and, unlike many of us, he tried mightily to live up to them. I shall never go to a better school than that of which he was teacher; and he never knew that he was teaching. I can see him now by the light of our camp-fire, almost above timber line in the Sweet

Water Mountains. And then he would talk,—reminiscences, prophecies, speculation, anecdotes,—not comic-paper anecdotes, but things out of his own experience. He had a deep, pathetic vein of humor, the existence of which, I think, most people never suspected. It always seemed to me to lie near the source of tears.

BEATRIX [*with suppressed emotion*]. I have heard one or two other men express a kind of loyalty to him.

FOSDICK. His men were always loyal. I began to understand that in those days. I was pretty young then; and I think that if he had told me to walk under a falling sequoia, I should have done it quite as a matter of course. Yet he would set traps to test his men,—dead-falls and bear-traps, right in the trail; and if they were caught, they heard from him. Oh! but he could make his meaning clear. His grammar was of a somewhat undress variety, but he never failed to convey the precise shade of thought. I have wondered sometimes whether with more education he would have been even more effective, or whether mere book-learning would have robbed him of the rugged strength that carried him so far. I would not have changed him: I like to remember him as he was.

BEATRIX [*speaking with difficulty*]. Did you say that he was not all or always hard?

Fosdick. Miss Wilber, I am at a loss. Here is the most intelligent woman I have ever known, the bravest, if I am a judge of the courage in the human eye, the most sympathetic, the——

Beatrix [*rising*]. Mr. Fosdick, you must not. I did not think it of you. And after your professions!

Fosdick [*rising*]. You do n't understand. I 'm going to make you understand. Because, if, when I 'm done, you wish to know me only as a talking machine, it will be because you are not the woman I—the woman I 've taken you to be. This is a test, if you please. You do not fear a test.

Beatrix [*drawing her head up proudly*]. Well?

Fosdick. Here is this woman, being what she is. She has professed an interest in my poor attempt to give her some idea of the finest man, body and mind, that ever trod the western wilderness. And at the end, when I have laid bare my—I can almost say love,—veneration for him, she asks a question that seems to show—to show that she has n't heard a word.

Beatrix [*turning away from him*]. Let me [*Choking.*]—Perhaps I can explain.

Fosdick. No. You shall not come down from the height where I—Nature has set you, to explain to any man. How did we lead up to Walton? Let me take the back trail.

[*He stands with his hands behind his back, looking upon the ground. She turns and looks at him. He looks up.*]

FOSDICK. I—[*Aside.*] Her eyes are wet. Like a clear pool. How clear! [*To her, after a pause, speaking very gently.*] I have been wrong. I have been blind. But now I see. We talked of the West: your heart went out to it. You spoke of your father: your spirit followed. And then, like the self-satisfied ape that I am, I could not—Miss Wilber, I lay my submission at your feet,—gladly,—gladly and most humbly.

BEATRIX [*looking away, and speaking with difficulty*]. You can not know—I—— [*A pause.*] What is in my heart I have always spoken. [*Turning to him, and speaking with slight vehemence.*] Do you think that I am blind to the courage in the human eye, that—that——

[*She walks away a few steps, and stands looking out over the water. In a minute she turns, and speaks while moving slowly toward him.*]

BEATRIX. I have been thinking how to make amends. I know of no better way than this: I have always liked to talk, I have talked so much, with [*Emphasizing the word slightly.*] men. Your submission I accept gladly,—gladly and proudly, in the form of an answer to my question. Did you say that he was not altogether hard?

FOSDICK. Let me see. Yes: I remember. One day when we were on the trail together, he fell into talk about his daughter,—quite a little girl, I should think, and, as I learned afterward from a prospector who had been in with them, rather a masculine little savage. He was so big and simple, for all his shrewdness, that I do n't think he knew how he was laying bare his heart to me. Perhaps he did not care. Yet he must have believed that I should understand. I can not forget that.

BEATRIX. Did—did he seem to think a good deal of her?

FOSDICK. Think a good deal of her? I felt awed, as one might feel in a great cathedral. I had never known what a father's love could be.

BEATRIX [*sobbing a little*]. I—I lost my father not very long ago; and I loved him, I hope, as much as John Walton loved his little savage.

[FOSDICK *leaves her, walking inland, and disappearing at the left of the rock.* BEATRIX *stands looking seaward.* MASTERSON *comes from the right of the rock, unseen by* BEATRIX. *He walks in the direction in which* FOSDICK *has gone, and looks after him.*]

MASTERSON. He 's gone, right enough. Now, if they 've had a lovers' quarrel, this is my chance. [*To* BEATRIX, *approaching her.*] Good morning. There are n't many things that would bring me out

at this ungodly hour; but a little bird whispered to me that I should find you here.

BEATRIX [*who has given him only one contemptuous glance over her shoulder*]. I prefer to be alone.

MASTERSON. Are you sure? It is n't easy for you to be alone. And office hours have n't begun yet.

[BEATRIX *turns as if to go in the direction of the hotel.* MASTERSON *is in the path.*]

BEATRIX. I wish to go back to the hotel. Will you let me pass?

MASTERSON. Do you know, you are superb when you are angry.

BEATRIX. I find it hard to make you understand. Perhaps you can not understand,—anything. I do not want to forget that I am a woman.

MASTERSON. No fear: I 'll not let you forget.

BEATRIX. Every word you speak to a woman is an insult, unless she is of your kind. You are to let me pass, you are not to speak to me again, lest I forget I am a woman.

MASTERSON. Well, what a row-de-dow! You should have been an actress. You do—Hah! That 's it. I 've got it now. Do you remember the Stone Image? 'T was a great show. Your part was small enough, my dear; but you did it damned well.

[*As he speaks, an expression of determination*

grows in her face, her brow becomes slightly puckered, and a cold flame rises in her eyes.]

MASTERSON. Naturally, I did n't know you, dressed this way, and on this vacation job. But, I say, I 'm glad to find you. I do n't mind waiting for the Walton girl—with you.

[*He advances a step.* BEATRIX *falls back a step, with a repellent gesture.*]

BEATRIX. The Walton girl!

MASTERSON. Now do n't be jealous, dear. The rich young western savage. I mean to marry her, but only for her money. You know who has my heart.

BEATRIX [*her face becoming set*]. No woman could give you what you need. A man's way is the only way.

[*As she speaks, she advances two paces toward him, and stands lightly and firmly, her right foot a few inches behind her left, her body inclined slightly forward, her right hand clenched at her side.*]

MASTERSON. Very fine. But drop the heroics. I 'm tired of them. I know a woman who can give me exactly what I need. You ought to go in for tragedy. But there 'll be no tragedy for you and me, sweet little spitfire, when we get a few of the dollars of that low-lived old pirate. [BEATRIX *throws back her head, with a gasping intake of the breath.*] Come, let's sit down.

[*He goes toward her, reaches out his right hand, and lays it upon her arm. Swinging her body upon the hips, she brings her clenched right hand crashing against his chin with all her strength, expelling her breath with something like a sob as the blow goes home. She springs back instantly, and stands poised for further action.* MASTERSON'S *hands drop to his sides, his chin falls upon his chest, his knees give way slowly, and he falls forward, and lies still. She looks off, starts, quickly changes her position, and stands still.* BILL *saunters in, panting hard.*]

BEATRIX. Hev ye lost somethin' p'raps, pardner?

BILL. I on'y come out for a little pasear.

BEATRIX [*trying to stand so that* BILL *will not see* MASTERSON]. I thought ye might be lookin' fer yer wind.

BILL. Who 's the corpse? Friend er yours?

BEATRIX [*turning toward* MASTERSON]. Oh! It 's Mr. Masterson. He must have one of his faint turns. He 's delicate.

BILL. So I sh'd jedge. I know them kind er faintin' spells. They 's on'y one cure fer 'em; an' thet 's for the onfortnit victim ter take a reg'lar course er them,—one every fifteen minutes fer erbout two days, er in desprit cases, three.

[MASTERSON *moves slowly and sits up.* BILL *shows a disposition to get at him, but* BEATRIX *steadily interposes.*]

BEATRIX. Now, Bill, he does n't need your kind help.

BILL. I do n't like his looks none w'atever; but I think he 'd look interéstin' a whole lot with his face kind er moved over an' erbout four of his ribs busted in.

BEATRIX [*To* MASTERSON]. You had better go. [*Sternly.*] Leave this place quickly. I think that this extraordinary person saw your unfortunate accident. He seems to be very excitable. [*Aside to* BILL] I had to say that. [*To* MASTERSON]. He has been talking most violently. I may not be able to restrain him.

[MASTERSON *rises, and walks away unsteadily.*]

BEATRIX. Perhaps you are still of some use, Bill. If you will be good, I shall be glad to have you near me. What brought you here? The boys——

BILL. Was all right by last accounts. I jes' nat'ly broke down in my nerves ter the islant, with nuthin' ter do but ride herd on the lopster-pots. So I cached all the duffle, an' jumped the reservation. I thought I 'd go up ag'in' the world fer a spell, ter see w'ether I was anythin' but a mere no account—

W'y did n't ye wait fer me? I do n't see thet I was any use thet time.

BEATRIX [*sitting down.*] Do n't say that. I think you did a good deal to put life into the poor gentleman.

BILL. [*sitting down.*] Poor—w'at? Ef—W'y did n't ye wait fer me?

BEATRIX. You are getting beyond me. Or am I outgrowing you? I do n't understand you. Perhaps our separation has estranged our minds,—once, I thought, rather sympathetic. All my life I have learned from you, and your best years have been given to teaching me, to stand on my own two feet, at the same time not forgetting other extreme portions of the body, designed by nature for trifling functions that the feet can not perform. I know, and try not to forget, that the hand, rather than the foot, should be used in tossing a flapjack, the eye in picking up a blaze, and the brain in reading it. Sometimes I have thought that you [*A slight pause, in which the suggestion of a dreamy smile passes over her face.*] set me too much upon a height,—expected too much of me. [*After a silence of several seconds.*] If we were riding together along the trail, and a sequoia four hundred and fifty feet high came toppling upon us to its fall, you would expect me, as a matter of course, to leap lightly from my saddle, and help you push the tree

the other way, lest it should block the trail. Yet when I find in the trail a toad, reeking—[*Hiding her face in her hands for a moment.*] God, how it reeked! with all uncleanness, and it will not move, and I must turn back or set my heel upon it, and I do what I must do,—when I do this, you come and say, "Why did you do it? Why did you not wait for me?" You would not have me false to your teaching—and my father's. And this thing that I had to touch defiled me so that I thought I should never again be clean. [*A pause.*] Then down through the gulch, from the mountains, came a wind. It did not blow very hard (yet, Bill, I never knew wind blow harder). In it was the tonic of the pines,—the smell of the wild flowers. It wrapped me all about, and washed me clean. The noisome vapors that were stifling me were swept away [*Throwing up her head, and taking two or three deep breaths,*] by the wind. The unclean thing was gone. [*A pause. A far-away look comes into her eyes. She speaks musingly.*] He said like a great cathedral. [*A pause.*] Have I been talking in my sleep? I must hev ketched it off you. All my bad habits, as well as most of my polite accomplishments, I get from you. I fear I am hopelessly dominated by your arrogant and brutal nature. What were we talking about? Oh! yes, about your following me about the country. If we were peo-

ple of the smallest pretension to social position, your conduct would certainly excite remark. Now that you have followed me, what am I to do with you,—you great, clumsy, dear old timber wolf? [*As she says this, she shakes him gently, holding his coat collar with both hands.*]

BILL. Follered 'er! Jes' w'en I 'm beginnin' ter git a leetle peace! An' I starts out fer a change er air, w'ich all my doctors allows I needs it bad, and the fust thing—Follered 'er!

BEATRIX. Did n't I order you to stay by the island?

BILL. Ye never give me an order in yer life, an' ye know I would n't take none from ye.

BEATRIX. William, you are perfectly impossible. I can not, in deference to my own self-respect, continue to employ a person with so little conception of what is becoming to his position. You are discharged.

BILL. Betty Gal, what 's come ter ye in this——

BEATRIX. No, Bill. I 'll give you one more chance. Sometimes I have had a faint suspicion,—surmise,—call it what you will, that somewhere in the wind-swept caverns of your vast and gloomy nature, one who was not too stern a worshiper of truth might say that he suspected that he saw faint traces of something that seemed to resemble a very

tenuous vein of humor. But I speak with diffidence. Certainly where I am concerned you seem sometimes to be quite impervious. I should not even try to discharge you, because I know that you would certainly miss fire.

Bill. I ain't goin' ter bother ye none. I 've took a job down ter the liv'ry stable; the hosses is more human then the lopster-pots. An' I 'll be on hand ef wanted.

Beatrix. Now listen hard. I 'm Miss Wilber here, and you are positively not to tell anyone different. This is an order. Savvy?

Bill [*savagely*]. You—[*Humbly.*] Yes, Betty.

Beatrix. You had better not try to see me until you get word from me, and be sure not to let anyone know that you know me.

Bill. I 'll stick ter my job down with the cayuses ez clost ez I kin; but I ain't goin' ter take no arter-dinner naps. Did n't I take notice of another gent eroun' these parts before the party with the faints passed erway?

Beatrix. It may be; there was one here.

Bill. Is he needin' my cure fer the faints any?

Beatrix. No, Bill. He 's one of us. He 's an eastern man, I think; but he knows our country. I think he loves it.

Bill. Knows it, does he? I 'd soon find out ef

he knowed it. How kin a he'pless leetle gal like you tell?

BEATRIX. He did work for Father,—surveying and that sort of thing. His name is Fosdick.

BILL. Fosdick? Seems ter me I heard tell—Like ez not, he 's one er these yer play-actors stuffin' ye full er lies. Knows it? They ain't nobody on this hull watershed knows anythin'.

BEATRIX [*rising*]. Well, for all I know he 's around here yet. P'r'aps ef ye was ter lay down here in the trail, he 'd come an' fall over ye. But I do n't want to see him again now, or to be seen talking with such a disreputable party as you. [*She goes off, toward the hotel.*]

BILL [*rising*]. So long, Gal. [*Looking after* BEATRIX.] Do n't want ter meet him ag'in now. I onct hed a kind er dream she 's not li'ble ter meet this knowin' party fer quite a spell.

[*He sits down, and prepares his pipe for a smoke. After he has taken a few whiffs,* FOSDICK *comes in.*]

FOSDICK. Excuse me: have you seen a young lady here?

BILL [*very deliberately and with pauses*]. I seen somethin' thet looked like a leetle mite of a gal, er a burro, er some sich a thing, hittin' the high places erway over yander.

FOSDICK. Are n't you from the West?

BILL. Not ez I knows on. The Fosdicks was all foaled an' branded in Aroostock County, State er Maine. I ain't never b'en ter college, but I was brought up proper. I 'm nat'ly all et up with curiosity, but [*Rising and approaching* FOSDICK, *who slowly assumes the attitude which* BEATRIX *assumed at the end of her interview with* MASTERSON.] not wishin' ter die sudden, I most gin'ly asts questions arter they b'en answered.

FOSDICK. I beg your pardon. I 've been away so long from the country where they raise men, that I 've sure forgot my manners.

[BILL *slaps his thigh with delight, and* FOSDICK *relaxes his attitude.*]

BILL [*affecting to pick something from the spot that he has slapped*]. I never see no sich man-eatin' hoss-flies ez they raise in thisyer kentry.

FOSDICK. I apologize for taking you for a western man. [BILL *makes a slight motion as if to draw a gun.*] I can't imagine what misled me.

BILL [*looking fixedly at* FOSDICK, *and speaking more slowly*]. P'raps it 's because up in Aroostook County we lives mostly on western canned tongue.

FOSDICK. As you seem to have taken the job of bell mule, I 'll confine myself to following your trail. My name is Fosdick; but [*Speaking deliberately and with slightly increased emphasis.*] that

ain't my faúlt. [*A pause.*] And I always go West when I want to take a full breath without busting some bric-à-brac.

BILL [*aside*]. He 'll do.

FOSDICK. You 'll excuse my being personal. I ain't heeled. It would please me a whole lot to meet you the other side of the divide; for in spite of your eastern birth and training, the air from the Pacific would be downright becoming to you. So long.

BILL. So long, stranger.

FOSDICK [*aside, as he moves away*]. This ruffian's name is n't Fosdick. I tried him on that.

BILL [*aside*]. I shore likes the way his head is screwed on.

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

[*The scene is the same as that of Act III. The time is two weeks later.* BEATRIX *is seated.* BILL *comes in.*]

BEATRIX. Well, Bill, I had to send for you. You 're late. I might hev b'en et ter death by a bear.

BILL. It 's a wonder ye was n't tore ter pieces by one er these yere wild chipmunks. They 're layin' constant fer unpertected females. A bunch er hosses come in from the West, an' I hed ter show them farmers how ter han'le 'em.

BEATRIX. I 'm glad enough to see your sunny smile again.

BILL. B'en reel lonesome, hev ye?

BEATRIX. I do n't know that I can say that, but I 've sure been longing for some of my own folks to talk to.

BILL [*sitting down*]. Ye might hev Herbert. I see a piece in the paper w'ere he 's livin' erboard some party's yacht thet put inter Portland with a busted rudder.

BEATRIX. Herbert is n't here, and I do n't know—No: you are the appointed victim; and if

you 'll give me a chance to get a word in edgewise, I 'll address my remarks to your inattentive ear. [*A pause.*] What did you say?

BILL. Nuthin'.

BEATRIX. I feared I had not quite understood what you did n't say. Did you ever feel a kind of gladness all over you, like heat-lightning? Did you ever feel that the sunshine was striking right through to your diaphragm, and that you 'd have to hold fast to a picket-rope to keep from floating away every time you took a full breath? Did you ever feel like that, Bill?

BILL. Not thet I remember of. I was struck onct by lightnin', an' it took the soles clean off er both my boots; but it did n't feel like thet none.

BEATRIX. If you had ever been truly happy, you would have felt like that.

BILL. Is thet the way you feel?

BEATRIX. Yes, yes.

BILL. You ain't b'en shook no way? You ain't fell on yer head ner nuthin' sence ye hit the trail?

BEATRIX. No, No. My head is sound; but I have been hit hard.

BILL. Hit! Show me——

BEATRIX. I never really felt the need of a woman before. Father, and you, and the boys,—I have n't needed any other. But now I want a woman to talk to, and there is n't any. [*Languish-*

ing upon his shoulder.] O sweet friend, kind nurse, you will have to be my blushing confidant.

BILL. You go right off to a docter. You ain't well.

BEATRIX. No, Bill: I ain't well. I 'm in love.

BILL. I knowed they 'd be hell ter pay, ef ye onct got off the range. In love? With a man?

BEATRIX. Did you think perhaps with a prairie dog? Yes, Bill, with a man.

BILL [*after a pause*]. Do ye happen ter know w'ere thet maverick thet 's troubled with the faints is located at present speakin'?

BEATRIX. William, I think I said with a man.

BILL. Ef ye call me William ag'in, I 'll— I 'll——

BEATRIX. What, good William, will you do?

BILL. Well now, who 's thisyer short horn thet 's b'en campin' on yer trail? How do ye know he ain't arter yer money, and——

BEATRIX. Stop. There are some things that I will not take even from you. [*After a pause.*] You do n't deserve to be told that he does n't know my name, that he thinks I 'm poor, that he was one of Father's men, but is his own man now, and mine, that——

BILL. What, him? This yer Fosdick?

BEATRIX. Bob Fosdick.

BILL. Hell! W'y he 's a man, he is.

BEATRIX [*taking off her hat*]. That was the impression that I tried to convey to you by the mere use of spoken language. I do n't know what other medium of communication to try with you. I suppose you are not conversant with the deaf and dumb sign language, are you?

BILL. But I did n't never think he 'd git soft erbout a gal.

BEATRIX. I do assure you, he can get most amazin' soft.

BILL. Well, ye want ter wa'ch out not ter go an' sp'ile him. P'raps he do n't know I see him w'en he thought I was goin' ter pull a gun on him.

BEATRIX. Bill, what do you mean? When were you going to pull your gun on him? I do n't believe you have your gun here.

[BILL *shows her his gun.*]

BEATRIX. Gents do n't pack guns in this country. What do you expect to do with yours?

BILL. You 'd oughter know I do n't never travel ter furrin parts without her. I thought she might come in handy. I 've knowed her to.

BEATRIX. And did you think I should prefer Robert after you had trimmed him to your taste with this?

BILL. Now, Betty Gal, it was right erway arter I met thet party with the faints, an' I shore felt thet somebody hed oughter be shot up.

Beatrix. So you thought you 'd begin with the man I 'm going to marry.

Bill. But ye was n't goin' ter marry him then.

Beatrix. Yes, I was.

Bill. W'at!

Beatrix. But I did n't know it.

Bill. No, ye did n't know it,—no more 'n Cape Horn Red McShane knowed [They was two on 'em, t'other one was Arizona Red.]—no more 'n Red McShane knowed thet—Fosdick! thet 's it. Last time I seen thet son of a sea-goin' hoss-thief he was cussin' out a party name er Fosdick. I would n't want no better recommend. It might er b'en him. They was talkin' er runnin' thisyer Red out er the kentry. He was plenty mean. Le' me tell ye.

Beatrix [*sitting up quickly, and looking at her watch.*] There is n't time now. Git, Bill. He 'll be here in five minutes. He 's never late. You made me forget.

Bill [*rising*]. So long.

[Bill *walks away, not toward the hotel.* Beatrix *sits smiling a little for several seconds.* Fosdick *comes in, goes to her, and, taking her head between his hands, kisses her hair tenderly.*]

Fosdick. If that barbarian is going to cross your trail, you 'll have to be careful.

[*He sits on a stone, and* BEATRIX *sits on the ground, leaning against him.*]

BEATRIX. Why? Have you met him?

FOSDICK. I had a little casual chat with him some time ago. As I had n't seen him since, I supposed he 'd gone. He does n't compose well with the landscape here.

BEATRIX. No; he 's evidently a western man. He came moseying along here; and when he began to speak his native language, I rather encouraged him to linger. His talk made me feel quite at home.

FOSDICK. You 'd better not encourage him. Probably he 's harmless, but I think he 'll bear watching.

BEATRIX. Why do you say that? I 'm sure he would n't hurt me.

FOSDICK. He says he was born and raised in Aroostook County. [BEATRIX *laughs.*] Which statement does not help me to accept with child-like confidence his further statement that his name is Fosdick.

BEATRIX. What! [*She shakes her fist surreptitiously in the direction in which* BILL *has gone.*]

FOSDICK. As I proved to my satisfaction it is not. When a gentleman who evidently is accustomed to wear a gun as part of full dress, even if he has n't one on him this minute, turns up at a peace-

ful New England summer resort, takes my name in vain to my face, and tries to put me through my paces in real western style, I naturally sit up and take notice. But I do n't want to make you nervous.

Beatrix. You do n't make me in the least nervous. I 'm quite used to his kind. I believe that even if he meant you harm, I could protect you.

Fosdick. Bless your sweet eyes, I know you would,—if you could,—with your life.

Beatrix. I think that would be very easy.

[*They sit silent for some seconds.*]

Beatrix. Tell me again, Robert, that we understand,—that you are content to wait.

Fosdick. I am content to wait, and I can't wait a minute.

Beatrix. As you will understand when there are no more secrets between us, all this has for me a flavor that is sweet beyond all words. It is sweet to you, Bob, is n't it?

Fosdick. Yes, dear; you know it is,—beyond all words.

Beatrix. And to me,—and the knowledge that it is so makes me feel selfish sometimes,—to me it has all that, and besides an added, a more poignant sweetness that you can not understand now. But that too you will share with me,—soon now. [*After a pause.*] I think sometimes, lately I have

been thinking often, it will be the last thing I shall know before I die.

[*He kisses her.*]

FOSDICK. To think that all the tritest things that ever lover said are true for me! Sometimes it seems to me that you are no mere woman, but rather the spirit incarnate of that country which is my only rival,—of its beauty, oh! always of its beauty, of its calmness, its quiet strength, its eternal rightness. The small, the mean, the least uncleanness can not come near you, can not live near you, nor near anyone that you inspire. Betty, you have purified me as with a flame, but a flame that does not consume.

BEATRIX. Call me Betty Gal.

FOSDICK. That 's it,—Betty Gal. For now I see that you are all human, and no mere goddess. After all, it is the woman that I love. It is the woman that can make me laugh,—how she can make me laugh! And it is the woman that could make me weep, but never will. How can you be so calm, so strong, and yet so delicate, so whimsical, so fanciful? Even prosaic me you do inspire (or is it some black art of yours?) with visions.

BEATRIX. Tell me.

FOSDICK. I remember a pool on the Yellow Gravel.

BEATRIX. Yes.

Fosdick. I have seen many like it; but this one pool has always lain in my mind as the perfect expression of that magic of forest and waters which we of the West (for your country is mine now) feel in our blood. This pool was different. Perhaps it was the evening light. After a shower the sun was shining through the misty air, which yet was very clear, with that peculiar, tempered, dying radiance which always seems to me to express, almost to be, peace,—peace and regret perhaps in equal parts.

Beatrix. I know.

Fosdick. The forest opened to the west, and this light streamed in,—upon and all about the pool. In some of your innumerable moods you are that pool,—as calm, as sweet, as clear,—the loveliest—Oh! I give it up.

Beatrix. It 's a nice game. I like you when you try to be a poet. I like you rather well then.

Fosdick. I remember we passed that way again on the back trail, and the pool had changed. The sun was high and burning hot. The surface of the pool was hard and glittering. But it was as clear as ever. All the soft beauty of the pool was gone. Indians had camped there. The litter of their camp was all about. The ashes of their burnt-out fires lay where forest mould and carpeting of moss had been before. The undergrowth had been

chopped and trampled down. But there were the same trees with their mighty boles rising far above us,—the same essential elements. Only the smaller, finer things had been destroyed. The unclean had been there, but was gone. [*After a little pause.*] Betty, I believe the pool was like John Walton then. Dear, your eyes are wet.

BEATRIX. Oh! I am homesick. Even with you, I am homesick.

FOSDICK. We will go back. Dear heart, we will go back to that very pool. Nature has given it back its beauty, I am sure.

BEATRIX. Robert.

FOSDICK. Yes, Betty Gal.

BEATRIX. I need not tell you how happy I am, and I can not,—I have tried. But I am not sure that I am doing right. I never deceived anyone; and now, in a way, I am deceiving you,—of all the world, you! But I have promised. And I never broke a promise, either. I have promised you that when I have left this place, you shall know all. But I have promised myself that I will not tell you until I have left this place. That promise weighs on me. I do n't know why it should. I have never, as far as I have had strength, been false to myself yet. I think that to be false to myself now would be the worst treachery to you. I can't get it out of my head that, somehow, we are being tested. I

am not so disloyal as to think of testing you. I know you.

Fosdick. And I know you, thank God.

Beatrix. Then, Robert, why do I feel like that? See now, I have never been afraid. My father taught me never to be afraid. And I have n't been weak, have I?

Fosdick. It is the simple truth that you are the strongest-hearted woman I have ever known,— that I have never known anyone as strong as you,— unless it was John Walton.

[*He takes pipe and tobacco pouch from his pocket, and prepares for a smoke. He hands a sulphur match to* Beatrix, *who lights it, and holds it for him while he lights his pipe.*]

Beatrix. And do you think I would ever break a promise?

Fosdick. You could not.

Beatrix. To myself?

Fosdick. To yourself least of all.

Beatrix. There is perfect trust between us, Robert.

Fosdick. Perfect trust.

Beatrix. Nothing could shake it.

Fosdick. Nothing.

Beatrix. Nothing that you could imagine.

Fosdick. Nothing that I could imagine.

BEATRIX. Promises can't help us, then.

FOSDICK. We do not need them.

BEATRIX. No; we do n't need them. [*Sitting up sharply after a brief silence, she seizes his coat-collar with both hands, and shakes him.*] You Bob, ain't ye got nuthin' in all this busy, bustlin' world ter do but ter set here with a half-witted summer gal thet do n't do nuthin' but whimper, an' whine, an' see things,—most prob'ly because she 's et some fried cakes er doughnuts ter thet there hotel that do n't agree with her? Can't I never git no sense inter ye nohow?

FOSDICK. Most prob'ly not. I guess my wits is wind-broke fer good. [*Rising and walking a few steps toward the water, leaving his tobacco pouch lying on the stone upon which he was sitting.*] Here comes a boat from the steam yacht that came in last night. I believe they 're going to land on the beach. The man in the stern sheets seems to find us interesting. If those glasses were loaded, we should be in danger.

BEATRIX [*rising and coming toward him*]. Robert, I am not going to run away.

FOSDICK. I shore won't bite ye.

BEATRIX. No, no. I 'm serious. I know this man who is coming ashore now. He is Herbert Walton, John Walton's son. He is coming here to speak to me. It will be hard.

Fosdick. In God's name, Betty, what does this mean?

Beatrix. I can not tell you now.

Fosdick. But—but——

Beatrix. You do not doubt me?

Fosdick. How can I doubt you?

Beatrix. That is enough. Whatever happens?

Fosdick. Whatever happens. I 'll leave you.

Beatrix. Yes, please.

[Fosdick *leaves her, walking inland. After an interval,* Herbert Walton *comes up from the beach. He is slightly but obviously intoxicated. He carries a pair of marine glasses.*]

Herbert. Who 's that?

Beatrix. Party name of Fosdick.

Herbert. I 'm not Bill Harrold. Keep your elegant brand of western talk for those that like it. Fosdick brought me here.

Beatrix. I did not suppose that you even knew I was here.

Herbert. Well, I did: and I know more. I 'm the head of this family; and I 'm not going to have you masquerading all over the place, and carrying on with the first miserable pup that makes eyes at you. If this is the Fosdick one of the men on-board tells about, we 'll soon send him about his business.

BEATRIX. Herbert, I 'd much rather talk with you this evening. You have been drinking,—probably to give yourself courage to face me. If you 've come here to fight, you 'll need more courage than whiskey can give you. As for Robert Fosdick, you will speak of him with at least the form of respect, as I am going to marry him.

HERBERT. Why in hell did n't Mrs. Davis warn me of this?

BEATRIX. Did you say Mrs. Davis?

HERBERT. Yes, since I 've let it out. She very kindly wrote to warn me that you were making a fool of yourself with—Mr. Fosdick. I 'm in her debt, if I am too late to prevent all the mischief.

BEATRIX. You are too late to prevent any of the mischief, as you call it.

HERBERT. We 'll see about that. I forbid you to marry him. I forbid you to see him,—a poverty-stricken loafer who 's only after your money.

BEATRIX. I decline to listen to you while you are in this condition. But one thing you are to understand. Robert does not know who I am. He does not know my name. I am Betty Wilber to him. You are not to tell him.

HERBERT. Tell him! I should rather think not. But do n't you suppose he knows your name? This woman knew it. He 's lying to you. [BEATRIX *turns to walk away.*] You stay here.

[*He runs after her. She turns, and faces him.*]

BEATRIX. Herbert, you are not sober, and you are all out of condition. You can't look me in the eye. Your hand is n't steady. I think you know that when I am white-hot with anger, as you have made me now, you are not man enough to stop me. This evening at the hotel. Get sober, and do n't talk.

[BEATRIX *goes toward the hotel, and* HERBERT *over the bank to the beach. After an interval* FOSDICK *returns, and recovers his tobacco-pouch. Looking off at the boat, he fills his pipe.* BILL *comes in, unseen by* FOSDICK, *whom he regards attentively before speaking.*]

BILL. Mornin', stranger.

FOSDICK. Good morning.

BILL. Them parties erboard the steam yacht must hev the hell of a good time.

FOSDICK. I 'd rather be on the deck of a birch-bark. [*Walks toward the hotel.*]

BILL. They seem ter be makin' a kind er crooked trail.

FOSDICK [*pausing and looking over the water*]. I have seen straighter steering.

[*A pause.*]

BILL [*looking sharply at* FOSDICK]. Looks like the trail Red—Shea made w'en he 's sufferin' from an over-dose er red-eye.

[*A pause.*]

FOSDICK. I believe they 're turning. Are they going to put back? [*A hail comes from the water.*] I think they 're hailing us. Perhaps Mr. Walton wants to speak to me.

BILL [*pulling his hat brim down so that he can just see the boat under it*]. Party a friend er yours? W'at 's his given name?

FOSDICK [*looking sharply at* BILL]. Why, I——

BILL [*speaking faster than is his wont*]. Not thet I give a damn. But I allers was dre'f'l interésted in given names. They was a party name er Eleazer Carr, an' I got so plumb interésted inter thet there name, Eleazer, thet I could n't never set ter my victuals without sayin' it over twenty-one times. Then they was Herbert——

FOSDICK. That 's it.

BILL. W'at? W'ere?

FOSDICK. Herbert,—Herbert Walton.

BILL. Oh! I plumb forgot. [*After an interval, during which* BILL *places himself so that he can not be observed from the water's edge.*] Say, stranger, you ain't the on'y one thet 's got friends erboard. The red-headed party thet 's pullin' bow hez shore got a back thet 's some familiar ter me, an' I would n't wonder a mite ef his face was n't eroun' t' other side of him. He was makin' his brags frequent erbout his sailorin'. I ain't pleased

ter death ter see him, but I ain't supprised none at all. I knowed he could n't last out—could n't last w'ere he was. His manners is some similar ter a rattlesnake, an' he 's li'ble ter say things thet 'd make me talk back reel onchristian. An' me feelin' thet soft I 'd cry ef I hed ter hurt a horned toad. I 'll pull my freight; but I 'd shore admire ter wa'ch thet cute little critter a-playin' in the sand. Ye want ter wa'ch out fer him. [*Walks away.*]

[*Voices are heard on the beach below, and* HERBERT WALTON *comes over the bank.*]

HERBERT. Now then, see here, you Fosdick.

FOSDICK. Mr. Walton?

HERBERT. That 's my name,—son of John Walton, and just as hell-bent on having my own way as ever the old man was. I want you to leave my—this Wilber girl alone. If I 've been neglecting her, I mean to look after her now.

FOSDICK. You 'll have to explain this.

HERBERT. I 'll explain nothing. Either you 're mixing up in things you know nothing about, or you 're a damned sneaking rascal.

FOSDICK. Mr. Walton, let us take the evil names for granted. I 'll be obliged to you, if you 'll tell me what this all means.

HERBERT. What it means, is none of your business. Now, will you go away from this place, or shall I have to make you go? If you know what

kind of a man John Walton was, you 'll be careful how you cross me.

FOSDICK. I will not go away until Miss Wilber tells me to go.

HERBERT. Is that your last word?

FOSDICK. It is,—until you are sober.

[FOSDICK *begins to move off.* HERBERT *rushes at him.* FOSDICK *side-steps, and avoids* HERBERT, *who stumbles and falls to his knees. He rises, and rushes again with greater fury. Again* FOSDICK *avoids him.* HERBERT, *finding nothing where he had expected to meet the resistance of* FOSDICK'S *body, goes down with his own impetus, striking his head upon a stone, and lies still.* FOSDICK *stoops over him, and turns him upon his back.*]

FOSDICK. I think he is only stunned.

[*Four sailors rush up from the beach. One of them,* RED MCSHANE, *aims a murderous blow at* FOSDICK *with a boat stretcher.* FOSDICK *rises just in time to dodge the blow, at the same time doubling up one of the other men with a body blow.* FOSDICK'S *hat falls to the ground. As the men press upon him, he falls back to the cliff. The men hang back.*]

MCSHANE. Spread out a leetle now, boys. We 've got him,—the pizen reptyle. Take yer time. He ain't li'ble ter git erway. Ef he gits through

you, I 'm layin' fer him with thisyer stre'cher. Wait now——

FOSDICK [*looking hard at* MCSHANE, *and speaking slowly*]. Who 's the party [*Shifting his intent gaze from* MCSHANE *to a point behind and at one side of* MCSHANE, *and speaking quickly and excitedly.*] behind you with the gun?

[*As the men turn to look behind* MCSHANE, FOSDICK *stoops, and picks up in each hand a stone somewhat smaller than a man's fist. When* MCSHANE *and the other men look back at him, he is standing erect with a stone concealed in each hand.*]

FOSDICK. That 's sure one on you, stranger. You must be losing your nerve. Next play 's yours. Do you guess you 're smart enough to get a rise out of me before I cash in?

MCSHANE. Wait now. I 've got somethin' ter say ter him erbout old times. Wa'ch him clost. He kin run, I know; but ef he 's like he uster be, he 'd ruther fight. Thet 's his on'y virtue.

FOSDICK. I 'm proud not to be able to remember the gentleman from Aroostook County, to whose remarks I have listened with very little interest. I beg to remind him that time is passing. If he came here to talk, I should like to know it. We might save ourselves a whole lot of trouble and some painful moments. If he came here to fight, why do n't

you naval heroes get to work? Are you waiting for re-inforcements?

McSHANE [*furiously*]. We won't keep ye waitin' on'y jes' long ernough ter let ye see the lay er the land. He 's the most onrighteous cattle-thief an' man-killer that ever pizened the air. [*The other men draw back a little.*] He crossed my trail twict out west, an' both times I seen the muzzle of his gun, w'en I was goin' peaceable erbout my business. An' now I 've got him. He was killin' Mr. Walton. We all seen him. They ain't no other witnesses. You all know me. Ye 'll stick ter thet story. Now, boys, go in an' git him.

[*The three men begin to advance upon* FOSDICK *very cautiously. He advances his left foot, swings back his right hand to the position for throwing, and rapidly threatens them in turn with the stone, which he now let them see, in his right hand.* BILL *walks on slowly, unseen by the men, and with his gun leveled at* McSHANE.]

BILL. Ye could n't never speak the truth, Red. They 's another witness. [*All look at him,* McSHANE'S *hands instantly shooting above his head at full stretch.* FOSDICK *drops the stones.*] Drop thet stick. [McSHANE *drops the stretcher.*] Ef I was reel pertic'ler, I 'd say two. They kin both speak straight. Ye 're list'nin' ter one on 'em right now, an' t'other one—[FOSDICK *stoops to pick up*

his hat, with his back to BILL.] Hands up, ev'ry last one er ye. [*He sweeps his gun toward the other men and then back to* MCSHANE. FOSDICK'S *hands shoot above his head, and he stands facing the cliff and with his back to* BILL. *The others put their hands up more slowly.*]

ONE OF THE SAILORS. Who the—[*He stops short, as* BILL *brings the gun to bear upon him.*]

[*In the instant when he is uncovered* MCSHANE *shows a disposition to make a break.*]

BILL [*covering* MCSHANE]. Easy, Red. I 'm settin' in thisyer game. I shore likes settin' in a man's game thisaway ag'in. Now I 'd appreciate yer kindness a whole lot, ef ye 'd all kind er stand up ag'in thisyer rock. Move. [*They all move up against the rock.*] Backs out. Clost ag'in' the rock. [*They obey.* BILL *lets the hand in which he holds the gun drop to his side.*] It allers did make me some nervous ter hold up more 'n three parties onless 'n I c'd see their backs. Do n't ye look eroun' none w'atever: I 'm li'ble ter shoot, ef ye scare me. [*Plaintively.*] W'ere was you kiotes raised? Ain't ye never b'en learned thet it ain't reel perlite ter stop ter ast fool questions w'en ye 're gittin' held up? I 'm at the talkin' end er this gun. Higher thar, Red. Ye might pick some reel pretty posies, ef ye was ter stre'ch yerself.

ONE OF THE SAILORS. Say, McShane, I thought

you was a man-eater. Are five of us goin' ter stand here like a row of belayin'-pins w'ile this ol' hobo speaks pieces at you?

McSHANE. Thet 's jes' the precise exact thing we 're goin' ter do, Bud. There ain't nuthin' else ter do w'en a gun-fighter fer shore gits the drop on ye. An' ef ye knowed him like I do, ye 'd be more civil spoken.

BILL. Thank ye, Red, fer them few kind words. They ain't nuthin' the matter with your manners; but ye must 've took notice they 're some free in the East. These other polecats do n't know no better. We 'll hev ter excuse 'em. They ain't hed your bringin'-up.

McSHANE. Ye allers was some humersome, Bill Herrold. But I find these yere remarks er yours consid'ble tiresome. W'at ye goin' ter do with us? Ef I 'd on'y er hed my gun.

BILL. Red, ye shore makes me cry. Ye 've disapp'inted me a whole lot. Ef ye 'd on'y er had yer gun ter make a play with, yer lovin' friends 'd be pickin' posies fer ye right now. But it 's got so in this ongawdly eastern kentry thet ye can't kill yer friend,—not yer oldest an' best friend—onless he kills you fust. I never did like yer face, Red. It do n't fit ye. I 've got so soft a-livin' East thet ef I sees it sudden, my gun 's li'ble ter go off before I c'n stiddy my nerves. So ye want ter hit the trail fer

the bad lands, ef I turn ye loose; an' do n't ye never stop ontel ye git thar. Oh! I 'm feelin' reel talkative. This is right w'ere I live. I 'm enj'yin'——

FOSDICK [*plaintively*]. I never wished before that I had been born deaf. It seems to me that the few able remarks of Mr. Red——

BILL [*very fiercely*]. Here, you Bob Fosdick, come here. [FOSDICK *begins to back toward* BILL.] Turn 'roun'. [FOSDICK *turns.*] Quick. [FOSDICK *advances quickly, with hands still up.*] Lower yer hands. Take thisyer gun. [FOSDICK *takes the gun.*] You hold 'em. I 'm goin' ter blow up.

FOSDICK [*holding on* MCSHANE]. I 've got ye again, Red.

[BILL *slams his hat to the ground, doubles up as if in great pain, emits a few choking sounds, and bursts into yells of laughter. In a comparatively silent interval,* MCSHANE *speaks.*]

MCSHANE. Won't somebody put a muzzle on thet crazy critter? He 's li'ble ter bite us, an' give us all the hyderphoby.

BILL [*suddenly recovering his equanimity, and picking up and donning his hat*]. I 'm feelin' so goodnat'red now, Mack, I 'm erbout ready ter let ye go back ter the bad lands, an' tell thisyer joke ter yer friends out thetaway. Tell 'em ye see Bill Herrold, er might er seed him, ef ye 'd b'en cross-

eyed in the back er yer head, a-holdin' up his pardner an' best friend, Bob Fosdick. Did n't I tell ye, Bob, thet I was gittin' old an' no-account? You a-standin' a-smellin' er thet there rock, an' me so plumb interésted in thisyer glad meetin' er ol' friends I could n't think er nuthin' but thet I was a-holdin' up the hull, entire outfit. Bob, ye won't hev no hard feelin's?

FOSDICK [*not taking his eyes from* MCSHANE]. Bill, where 's Mr. Walton? I thought he was only stunned. Has n't he come to yet?

BILL. I shore fergot him, too. [*He goes hastily to* HERBERT, *and makes a hurried examination.*] No. He 's hurted bad, Bob. My Gawd! I 've seen too many men—[*Rising.*] Here, turn them kiotes loose.

FOSDICK. Git, Red. Hands down. [MCSHANE *and the other sailors lower their hands, and move slowly toward the beach.*] I begin to remember something about you; and I should not lose any sleep, if I had to kill you. Back to your vessel, and do n't show your face ashore again. Bill and I will both go heeled. [*Indicating one of the sailors.*] Leave that young hero here. Git.

[MCSHANE *and two of the men disappear in the direction of the beach. One of the sailors remains.* FOSDICK *returns the gun to* BILL. FOSDICK *and* BILL *stoop over* HERBERT.]

FOSDICK [*to the sailor*]. You wait. Good God! Bill, this man is in a bad way. See this— [*Rising and turning to the sailor.*] Listen; listen hard. Do n't start until you understand. Then run as hard as you can run. Find Miss Wilber— Wilber at the hotel. Tell her three things. One: Mr. Walton is up here with a sprained ankle,— very badly sprained. Two: She must send a wagon—wagon (three) with a doctor—doctor as quick as possible. If she is not there, tell the hotel clerk a man is dying here from a blow on the head, and a doctor must be rushed. Do you understand?

THE SAILOR. Yes, sir. Sprained ankle— Wilber—wagon—doctor—quick—clerk.

FOSDICK. Good. Now run—like hell. [*The sailor runs toward the hotel.*] We can do nothing for him, Bill: this is beyond us. Bring some water.

[BILL *goes over the bank.* FOSDICK *kneels over* HERBERT, *and loosens his collar.* BILL *returns with water in his hat, which he lays by* HERBERT. BILL *sits on the ground, and lifts* HERBERT'S *head to his knee. After bathing* HERBERT'S *brow and throat,* FOSDICK *rises. While* BILL *speaks,* FOSDICK *paces to and fro, stooping now and then over* HERBERT *to bathe his brow or to feel his pulse.*]

BILL. Not wishin' ter persume none w'atever, Bob, but bein' nat'ly some interésted inter ye, I 'd

take it mighty kind ef ye was ter see fit, w'en ye 're good an' ready, ter tell me ez much ez ye think I 'd ought ter know erbout this yere. [*Takes off his coat, folds it, and puts it under* HERBERT'S *head.*]

FOSDICK. Not now: I can't talk now. Later I 'll tell you all about it.

[*A silent interval.*]

BILL [*rising*]. Bob, I wants ter tell ye w'at I seen. I never went back on my pardner yit, an' I shore ain't goin' back on you. I was standin' over yander a piece: I did n't come reel nigh tel thisyer Red starts ter make his play. I see ye start ter go erway. Then I see thisyer Mr. Walton kind er move on ye. Then he went down. I could n't see ez ye hit him none. I do n't know. He jumped right up, an' went fer ye ag'in; an' then I thought I see ye hit him. Leastways he fell, an' laid right w'ere he is now. I do n't rightly know: I ain't cert'in shore. The bushes bothered me.

FOSDICK. Thank you, Bill. That 's near enough for the present. [*A pause.*] Do n't ask me to tell you now. Later, I promise.

BILL. I did n't ast no questions, an' I do n't want no promises.

FOSDICK. I know it, pardner, I know it for sure. [*A pause.*] I 've a good deal on my mind now,

BILL. Where 's that wagon? Go down to the turn in the trail, and see if they 're not coming.

[BILL *disappears toward the hotel, and returns in a few seconds.*]

BILL. They 're comin'! They 're right here. They 'll hev ter leave the wagon down here a piece.

[BEATRIX *runs in.*]

BEATRIX. Where is he? Herbert. [*Going to him.*] What 's this? [*She stoops over him.*] They said it was a sprained ankle. [*Kneeling over him.*] God in Heaven! He is not dead?

[*The doctor, the sailor, and the driver come in.* FOSDICK *speaks to the doctor aside. The doctor kneels, and examines* HERBERT'S *head,* BEATRIX *kneeling by him, with her hands clasped. The doctor speaks to her. They rise. Under the doctor's direction, and with his help, the other men, except* FOSDICK, *bear* HERBERT *away.* BEATRIX *is about to follow.*]

FOSDICK. Betty.

BEATRIX. No. No. I must go with him.

FOSDICK. Give me a minute—one minute. He spoke as if he—as if you had some claim on him. [*A brief interval.*] You knew him in the West?

BEATRIX. Yes.

FOSDICK. You knew him well?

BEATRIX. Yes.

FOSDICK. And long?

BEATRIX. And long. No more. He may be dying now. They say there was a struggle. I pray God that if you have killed him, I may have strength to forget you. Go. Go.

END OF ACT IV

ACT V

[*The scene is that of Act IV.* Beatrix *and* Bill *are seated as* Beatrix *and* Fosdick *were seated in that act. Her attitude expresses the relaxation of utter fatigue.*]

Beatrix. No one but you in all the world will ever know about all this. Do you suppose, Bill dear, our souls must go under the harrow before we can understand a little,—understand anything? [*After a pause.*] Why did he go away without a word? Did he fear that he had killed Herbert? But no; he is not a coward.

Bill. He shore ain't.

Beatrix. Then, Bill, how could he go, if he trusted me? [*After a pause.*] I was so strong, so confident, so young. Strong I shall be again perhaps, but never again confident or very young. How long is it since I left the island?

Bill [*testily*]. W'y do ye pester me with yer fool questions? [*Very gently.*] It 's nigh onter two months, Betty Gal.

Beatrix. Nigh onter two months, Bill? No: I think it 's nigh onter ten years. And five years ago Herbert was hurt. But he began to get better

six days ago. That I can understand; for then my big brother came back to me,—I hope to stay. Sometimes now it seems that we must be back in the old days: we live them over and over together, as much as the nurse will let us. I almost think I am happy then; then I can forget. [*After a pause.*] And then sometimes, out here with you, I know that if I were not so strong, or if I were stronger,—I do n't know which, I should surely die. It does not really matter now whether I live or die. It does n't seem to me to be of the least importance. And all the time I know how silly it is to feel like that, because there are Herbert, and you, and the boys.

BILL: Betty, ye 'll hev me plumb locoed,—you an' yer dyin': Ain't ye ez good 'a man ez ever ye was? Ye ain't lost no limbs,—not ez I 've tuk notice on. Ye c'n pick up a blaze ez fur ez ever ye could; an' I do n't doubt but w'at, ef ye tuk the notion, ye c'd han'le both the kids ez easy ez ever ye could. Ye want ter git up on yer hind laigs an' make a bluff, ef ye can't do no better. I never see ye before w'en ye could n't git no fire, even ef the woods was drippin' from a three days' rain. [*After a pause.*] Termorrer you, an' me, an' the kids goes ter a pawnd I 've heard tell erbout a piece up kentry here. She 's called the Wi'ches' Mirror, er some sich a fool name. She 's built outer reel sweet

water thet a w'ite man c'n drink. An' she 's plumb full er islants,—islets, ez I onct heard a towerist lady call 'em,—not properly knowin' w'ether she was makin' oration erbout the beauties er natur' er the mysterious mysteries of a lady's t'ilet,—ain't thet it? Well now, they hev shallops [Thet 's w'at the towerist lady called them little old scows they hed on Stinkin' Water Pawnd.]—they hev these yere shallops on this lake I 'm tellin' ye erbout; an' they look most oncommon like birch canoes, made outer reel birch bark: ain't it wonderful? An' on still nights, w'en the moon is erbout three quarters full, ye c'n paddle eroun' this lake er mine in them shallops, an' listen ter the trouts, w'ich at them times they climbs the trees, an' sings most oncommon sweet. An' the shores er thisyer pawnd is plumb picturesque an' pleasin', bein' mostly secon' growth hard wood. An' they air full er playful critters, w'ich they come out an' play in the moonlight w'en the trouts is singin',—jack rabbits, an' field mice, an' marmots, an' porkerpines, an' polecats.

Beatrix. O Bill, that 's like old times too. The fairy tales you used to tell! The most wonderful fairy tales that any little girl ever heard,—all about the trees, and the critters, and the birds, and the fish. Did n't you ever use to sprain that marvellous imagination of yours?

BILL. Not ez I 've noticed. I ain't never hed no cramps in it.

BEATRIX. Yes: I 'll go with you and the boys to-morrow. [*After a pause.*] Has any woman ever told you what a darling you are?

BILL. Not ef I hed time ter draw fust. No: I ain't b'en nobody's darlin', not fer quite a spell back.

BEATRIX. [*After a pause*]. You know Herbert can't remember how he was hurt, and nobody else will tell me. Tell me, Bill.

BILL. W'y, it wa' n't nuthin'. He was jes' hurted, like I allers tol' ye.

BEATRIX. But there was a struggle.

BILL. Not ter say w'at ye 'd call struggle. They was a round up of a few parties thet hed n't met up tergether fer quite some time.

BEATRIX. What happened?

BILL. Well, some on 'em—Now, looker here, you Betty Gal, I do n't doubt but w'at ye 'll pull the gizzard outer me, ef ye keep on. You leave my innards be. I need 'em.

BEATRIX [*with a wan smile*]. Did you ever go to a pink tea? I think you might work quite an extraordinary change in the prevailing tint. [*After a pause.*] You think I did right, do n't you?

BILL. Ye could n't hev done no diff'rent.

BEATRIX. If I had not deceived him— But I could n't go back on my word?

Bill. No.

Beatrix. Not even my word to myself.

Bill. No more 'n yer dad could.

Beatrix. That 's so, Bill,—whatever happened. But I do n't understand everything; and I 'm going to understand. [*Sitting up.*] It ain't like me, is it, to leave a trail that I 've started to follow to the end?

Bill. Ye ain't never done it yit,—no more 'n yer dad did.

Beatrix. That 's it,—no more than my dad did.

Bill. W'y the old man 'd be plumb ershamed er ye,—layin' here an' whimp'rin' like a kiote w'en the dawgs sets their teeth inter it, 'stid er holdin' yer yap, an' humpin' yer back, an' fightin' like a wounded timber wolf. Hev ye clean give up? Ain't ye no account w'atever? [*Rising, and withdrawing his support from her somewhat roughly.*] I tells ye plain, I 'm done with thisyer baby talk er yours. Was ye cal'atin' a man growed 'd want ter spend the rest er his wuthless days a-list'nin' ter you bawlin' like a baby grizzly tuk erway from his ma?

Beatrix. You 're cruel, to talk—[*After a pause she rises to her feet, and speaks standing, with her head thrown back and her hands clenched at her sides.*] No: you 're dead right. Was I allowin' I was beat? I must have forgotten that I was my father's daughter. Wait: let me think. [*A pause.*]

You must help me, Bill. He wrote to me. [*Taking a letter from the bosom of her dress.*] I could not answer. I thought he had killed Herbert. Even now you can not tell me that if Herbert had died— And later what could I say? He only asked that I should see him. Perhaps when all this—No: I must do something now. What shall I do, Bill?

BILL. Do? I know w'at I 'd do. He lef' ye: thet 'd be ernough for me. Thet 's how I feel; but I do n't know ez thet 's the way I think. I 've knowed quite some skunks, Betty Gal; an' I 've knowed a few parties thet was square an' game. Thet 's him. He did n't never kill no party he did n't hev no right ter kill. Jes' ye set down onct, an' talk it over slow an' easy like with him. You won't tell him no lies; ner he won't tell you none. I seen his eye.

BEATRIX. If he had not lost his faith! He did not trust me.

BILL. An' ain't you b'en mistrustin' him? I think likely ef I 'd er b'en him, my trust inter ye would hev b'en some spraint,—leastways fer a spell. An' w'at did ye say ter him the last thing?

BEATRIX. I hardly know: I was thinking only of Herbert.

BILL. W'ich most likely he seen ye was n't

thinkin' er nuthin' on'y Herbert. Was ye figgerin' thet was li'ble ter make him feel reel j'yful? I do n't doubt but w'at his wits was millin' like a bunch er crazy steers. All Bob Fosdick wants is a square deal. I 'm backin' his game. The air from the Pacific, says he, 'd be reel becomin' ter me.

Beatrix. Perhaps you are right. Oh! I think you are. But love without faith,—that can never be.

Bill. Who 's this a-lopin' up this way?

Beatrix [*thrusting the letter into the bosom of her dress*]. Bill, Bill, it 's Robert. What shall I do?

Bill. Ye 're the docter, Betty Gal; an' most prob'ly this is the chanst ye 've b'en prayin' fer. [*Turns to go.*]

Beatrix [*laying her hand on* Bill's *arm*]. Do n't go, Bill: do n't go yet.

[*She takes two or three heaving breaths; and then stands very upright, with one hand on* Bill's *arm, the other clenched at her side.* Fosdick *comes in.*]

Fosdick. Betty! [*In a whisper.*] Betty!

Beatrix [*speaking firmly*]. Why have you come back?

Fosdick. I had to see this spot again. I could not—But you, why are you here? I knew from

the papers that Walton's sister had come, and his two younger brothers,—that he would recover. But you?

BEATRIX. I could not leave him.

FOSDICK. You love him?

BEATRIX. Yes.

FOSDICK. You have loved him long?

BEATRIX. Yes.

FOSDICK. I do not see that more can be said.

[FOSDICK *turns to go.* BEATRIX *takes her hand from* BILL'S *arm, and advances a step toward* FOSDICK. BILL *walks off.*]

BEATRIX. Robert.

[FOSDICK *stops and turns toward her. They stand gazing into one another's eyes.* FOSDICK *advances slowly until he stands four or five feet from her.*]

FOSDICK. I thought my faith was dead. How should it not be? But you are the same Betty. We said, "Whatever happens."

BEATRIX. Whatever happens.

FOSDICK. You loved me?

BEATRIX. Yes.

FOSDICK. I do not——

[*She extends her arm straight and stiff toward him, the fingers of her hand together, the palm down. As she speaks, she swings this arm and her body away from him until she faces to the front.*

Holding her arm so, she advances three paces, while speaking, and stands in mid-step. She drops her arm, and holds both arms at her sides, strained a little back, with the hands clenched: Her brow becomes puckered. Her chin is thrust forward, her head thrown back, her eyes partly closed. She is peering down a dim forest trail.]

BEATRIX. Wait. I have set my feet upon the trail again. Let me pick up the blazes. [*After a pause.*] You said a flame. Do you remember?

FOSDICK. The flame that does not consume.

BEATRIX. But there is a fire that does consume,—destroy,—the smoldering fire of doubt.

FOSDICK. Sometimes, I think, it strengthens,—after it has passed.

BEATRIX. Perfect love, I thought you had. It seemed so to me. I could not take less. Yet perfect love means perfect faith. You went away from me.

FOSDICK. You told me to go.

BEATRIX. I do n't remember.

FOSDICK. And when you told me to go, and when I saw how you loved him——

BEATRIX. You would have been more than human, if you had not doubted? It may be so. I thought our love divine. Perhaps it was only human. Human love and human faith,—these are enough, if they are perfect. I could not take less.

FOSDICK. Let me see your eyes. [*She turns to him.*] The same clear pool. Nothing false, I said, nothing unworthy——

BEATRIX. Robert, do you think I could have found the trail again, if I had really left it?

FOSDICK. The trail?

BEATRIX. I only lay down to rest. I was very tired. But now I am strong again.

FOSDICK. You were never weak.

BEATRIX. For a time I was. The trail to your heart.

FOSDICK. Betty, how can I look into your eyes—Whatever happens. And then my faith failed. But now I know——

JACK [*calling without*]. Sis, O Sis. [*He comes in, with* DICK.] Where 's Bill? As sure as my name 's—Oh! Excuse me.

FOSDICK. Who are these boys? Walton's two brothers are here.

BEATRIX. They are his brothers.

FOSDICK. And——

BEATRIX. And my brothers, too.

FOSDICK [*turning to go*]. God forgive me.

[*The boys go off.*]

BEATRIX. Robert. Bob.

FOSDICK [*turning to her*]. It is not possible that you forgive me?

BEATRIX. I only love you.

[*She goes to him, and he takes her in his arms.*]

FOSDICK. My faith was coming back.

BEATRIX. It had come back.

FOSDICK [*looking into her eyes*]. The pool is as clear as ever.

BILL [*coming in*]. Did I hear ye callin', Betty Gal? Here, you Bob! Fosdick!

BEATRIX. Bill, Bill, I have followed the trail to the very end.

[*She goes to* BILL, *throws her arms about his neck, and buries her face on his shoulder. Supporting her with his left arm, he reaches his right hand to* FOSDICK, *who grasps it.*]

THE END

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